CUSTOM AND JUSTICE IN THE CAUCASUS:
THE GEORGIAN HIGHLANDERS

A DISSERTATION
IN ANTHROPOLOGY
PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ALEXANDER GRIGOLIA

PHILADELPHIA
1939

CONTENTS

000

CHAPTER PAGE

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND 1

II. FORMATION OF COMMUNITIES 6

III. RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES 19

IV. HOSPITALITY 53

V. FAMILY 57

VI. MARRIAGE 63

VII. SEX AND RELIGION 90

VIII. DIVORCE 116

IX. THE POSITION OF WOMAN 122

X. PROPERTY 130

XI. CRIME AND PUNISHMENT 140

XII. THE LAW OF CONTRACT AND MUTUAL AID 162

BIBLIOGRAPHY 177

[p. ii is blank]

CHAPTER I

Introduction and Background

101 From remote antiquity the Caucasus has attracted the interest and imagination of ancient people. The Caucasus was the limit of the world for the Egyptians; for the Greeks it was a land of wonders and of wealth, "rich in natural fertility and mineral wealth, where the cities were embowered in orchards, the vines hung wild from the fruit trees, and the rivers ran gold—gold which the natives secured by the simple device of leaving sheepskins in the mountain streams to catch the precious metal." The Caucasus was to ancient Greeks the country of the golden fleece and they place the heroes of their beautiful myths in a Caucasian setting. The myth of Argonauts, concerning the principal heroes of the Hellenic world, relates their adventures in search of the golden fleece in ancient Colchis—western Georgia of the present time. The myth of Prometheus places him chained upon one of the summits of the Caucasus. "Aeschylus has secured for the remote snows of the Caucasus their place in the world's poetry. He has celebrated them as the prison of Prometheus,"[1] who stole some embers of fire from heaven and brought them to mankind.

"Rapidas Limosi Phasidos undas" writes Ovid, (*Met.* VII. 6) about ancient Phasis, the present river Rion. The ark of Noah landed on the mount of Ararat, as is believed, at the southern edge of the Caucasian peninsula. The ethnologists of the past regarded the Caucasus as the cradle of humanity. For others the Caucasus was the refuge and hiding place of many peoples. The writers of the ancient world and even of quite modern times describe the Caucasus as the land of a multitude of races, nations and tongues. The Arab writers called the Caucasus "Jebel-al-Suni," meaning "the mountain of languages." The ancient historian, Strabo, in describing the Caucasus, relates that in the city of Dioscurias peoples of so many languages came to the market for commercial purposes that scores of interpreters were employed for business transactions.

---

[1] Freshfield: I, 3.

If we put myths and antiquities on the side for the while, and look on the Caucasus with modern eyes, trying to see and understand things as they are, we shall have before us a comparatively small area of the earth, situated between Europe and Asia, and inhabited by various peoples of different languages. In its topographical and climatic conditions, the Caucasus shows great variety. Just as there are great differences in the climate of the Caucasus Mountains, there are also differences in the composition of the population of the peninsula. There are peoples of different customs, habits of life and physical features. We may divide them into two major groups: (1) the aborigines of the Caucasus, and (2) the actual inhabitants of the Caucasus. The last mentioned group comprises peoples, nations and even races representing the newcomers who migrated to the country in historical times, as, for example, the Persians, Tartars, Turks, Slavs, Greeks, and others. On the other hand, by the aborigines of the Caucasus we understand those who are not related at the present time in their speech to any other group of the human race, being the so-called Japhetids of Professor Marr. We accept the name with no obligation to follow all conclusions and views of Professor Marr concerning this theory. As a matter of precaution we may mention the view of A. Dirr on this point. It cannot be accepted, according to Dirr's reasoning.[2] He states that there is much truth in Marr's theory and that its discovery is comparable in importance to that of the unity of Indo-Germanic languages; still, "Marr has altered his thesis or rather 'Procrustean bed,' on which he lies, and maims languages to such an extent that Dirr can no longer follow him, but must protest strongly against the attempt to bring into philology the political view now propagated from Moscow, of the subjugation of the Orient by Indo-European 'bourgeois colonial policy.'"[3]

---

[2] Dirr: b, 109.
[3] Wardrop: b, 187-8.

The Japhetids of the Caucasus occupy on the peninsula an area 101
approximately similar in form to a triangle, the base of which is on the eastern shores of the Black Sea, and its apex approaching the northwestern part of the Caspian Sea. They are composed of the following groups: (1) the Northwest group, or the Western mountaineers, comprising the Adighe nation, with subdivisions of Circassians and Kabardians, Ubych, and Abkhazes; (2) the Northeast group, composed of the Chechen and Lesghian groups or the mountaineers of Daghestan; and (3) in the Southwest, the Georgian nation, with subdivisions of Georgians proper, Megrelians, Svans, and Lazes.

Among all these three groups live the Ossetes, a people who belong linguistically to the Indo-Germanic branch, and show, excepting their language, close similarity to the above-mentioned peoples of the Caucasus. Taking into consideration this fact and the time of their appearance in the Caucasus, we are fully justified in treating them in our discussion together with the peoples of the Caucasus, although not counting them as related to these peoples.

Not only by their language do the peoples of the Caucasus attract the attention of investigators, but also by their customs, manner of life, beliefs and historic past, which show such peculiarities that they are of great interest for study and investigation.

Our aim in this work is to discuss the conditions of social life 121
and customs practiced among the four small groups of the 101
Georgian nation, who, secluded for many centuries in almost inaccessible defiles of the mountains, still preserve their peculiar customs, which have drawn the attention of many investigators who visited the country. These groups are: the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes in the east, and the Svans in the west.

Their exact number is not known, although there is much 101
statistical data giving different figures. For example, an interesting 162
fact is brought out by the Russian investigator, Gurko-Kriajin,[4] concerning the Khevsurs. This author shows the contradiction in the statistical data concerning the number of

---

[4] Gurko-Kriajin: 270.

101 Khevsurs: the data show that in 1838 there were 1,510 Khevsurs
162 living; in 1855 the number is shown as 3,500; in 1873 the population was 5,846; in 1891, 7,000; in 1900, 6,560; in 1924, 10,000; in 1926, 3,527. According to the latest statistical data, of January 4, 1927, there were 3,564 Khevsurs living. This deficiency in the data may be accounted for by the behavior of the people themselves. They mistrust any sort of official numbering, being suspicious of any new laws which might hinder their liberty.

The Khevsurs occupy the mountain area east of the Kasbek and the Georgian military road. The country is divided into two parts, called in the Georgian *Pirikitheli,* meaning "on the other side," situated on the northern slopes of the main ridge. The larger portion of the country is situated on the southern slopes of the main ridge, and is called in the Georgian, Pirakitheli. Khevsuria is composed of five communities: Arabauli, Chincharauli, Arkhotionu, Shatilioni, and Pirikitheli. This land is situated between the lands of the Tushes and the Pshavs—also Georgian mountaineers (*M'thiuls*)—and the land of the Kists. The Tushes some 10,000 in number, occupy the Thionet region of the department of Tiflis, on the banks of the river Aragva and on both sides of the river Iora, which flows into the river Alazani. The Pshavs, numbering about 15,000 persons, form twelve communities. Tushetia is composed of four communities: Tsova, Gometsari, Perikitheli, and Chagmi. Under the tsarist Russian government, the Tushes, Pshavs and Khevsurs comprised one administrative district. The Svans—the fourth group of Georgian Highlanders —occupy the main part of the ridge, Eastern Georgia, and are about 8,000 in number. They live in the high valleys of the rivers Ingur and Tskenis-tskali, and their territory is divided into three parts: (1) the former Dadian Svanetia, under the rule of the former Megrelian lords, Dadiani; (2) the former Princely Svanetia, subject to the princes Dadeshkeliani; and (3) Free Svanetia.

The Khevsurs, Pshavs, and Tushes, as well as the Svans, are
596 divided into separate communities. The communities in turn are
621 composed of family groups, which may be regarded as the social units among the Georgian Highlanders. The family group is not the same among the different peoples. For example, among the

Khevsurs it is the individual family; among the Pshavs and Tushes 596
the large family groups prevail; among the Svans, the so-called 621
homestead is seen. The large families, or so-called joint families, and the occupancy by the representatives of one family of the same village or area, is brought out usually as a peculiar trait of the Georgian Highlanders, but it should be mentioned that this was a universal occurrence in Georgia, and that similar conditions exist also among the Georgians of the Lowlands up to the present time. For example, the villages of Megrelia are composed mostly of the members of two or three families who live together in groups, creating one community.

Chevsur
Swan

CHAPTER II

FORMATION OF COMMUNITIES

621 Although all members of a community of Georgian Highlanders regard each other as kinsfolk, related through the blood by having one common ancestor, it would be in error to regard this as fact. The belief in the existence of a community of people composed entirely of blood relatives is a legal fiction.

The traditions and historical records throw light on the process of formation of Georgian Highland social units, which were not, as believed, "isolated" or "closed to strangers," but in reality were formed of various alien elements. Thus the Khevsur communities, Arbauli and Chincharauli, according to the traditions of the people have Kakhetian origin.[1] And the communities of Arkhotioni, Shatilioni and Pirikitheli (situated on the other side of the ridge) were formed by Georgians, Ossets, Kists, Georgian Mthiuls, and other mountaineers. As to the origin of the inhabitants of the village called Biso, it is ascribed to a Jew by the name of Biso who was supposed to have come to this place with Queen Tamar during her visit to the country. Concerning their origin the Khevsurs have preserved a tradition.[2] They consider a certain man by the name of Gudaneli as their first ancestor. He was a peasant vassal of a landlord in Kakhetia, and to escape punishment for some crime which he had committed, he found refuge in the Pshav village of Apsho. From his two sons, Arabuli and Chinchara, originated the family of Arabuli, consisting of 320 homes, and the family of Chincharauli, with 210 homes. They all live in thirty-five villages, the principal one of which is the village of Gudani on the bank of the river Aragva, well known with its large and respected sanctuary, *Gudanis-jvari.* Among the latecomers in Khevsuria are the Kists, the Ossets, the Georgian-mthiuls, and even Jews. So it is related that the Georgian Queen

---

[1] Eristov: 79-80.
[2] Zisserman: 207-8.

621 Thamar, when visiting Khevsuria, brought with her a Jew who was taken ill and remained there; afterward he married and from him originated the village of Biso.

Among the Pshvas, neighbors of the Khevsurs, we find that of the six families forming the community Chargal, three are of foreign origin. The community consists of the following six families: Pirkutiani, Shaverdiani, Padjkaani, Baiani, Gordzamauli, and Guraspauli; from them the Gordzamauli are emigrants from the Georgian province of Kakhetia; the Baiani have Tartar origin, and the Guraspauli are the descendants of a captive from the Mokhev-Georgians.[8]

Among the Tushes we find the same phenomenon in the development of their community as was found among their neighbors, the Khevsurs and the Pshavs.

621 The people of the Tushes comprise four communities: Tsova, Gometsari, Pirikitheli and Chagmi. The members of Tsova belong 101 to the Galgai tribe of Kists and originally lived in the defile of Gligva, formed by the river of the same name, on the northern slopes of the ridge. From there they migrated to the land of the Tushes and settled down in the region occupied by them at the present time, at the source of the river Alazani. They still partially preserve their Kistian language, their present language being a mixture of Tush and Kistian. As for the other Tush communities—Gometsari, Pirikitheli and Chagmi—they were made up of emigrants and refugees of different peoples, such as Georgians, Pshavs, Khevsurs, Lesghians, Didos, Kists, and other tribes of the Caucasus.

144 Besides the examples cited above showing, on the basis of traditional and historic data, the formation of the social groups of the Georgian Highlanders from the different alien elements, there is also another factor confirming this phenomenon; that is, the absence of the typical physical traits among them. Thus, in reality, there is not one physical type of Khevsur, Pshav, Tush or Svan. This circumstance clearly advocates the heterogeneity of the component parts of their communities and the admixture

---

[8] Machabeli: I, 385.

144 of foreign blood. This fact is endorsed also by every investigator or mere traveler who has come in contact with these people.

181 Describing the differences in the moral traits among the various members of Svan communities, R. Bernoville[4] also mentions the diversity of their physical types. "Parmi toutes ces communes," writes the author, "issues d'un même sang et séparées seulement par quelques verstes[5] de distance, il n'en est pas une qui n'ait son cachet, son characterе à part. Tout, jusqu'au type des physionomies, donne la preuve de cette curieuse classification."

181 144 In the same way as Bernoville, the Russian investigator, V. J. Teptsov[6] describes the diversity of physical and moral traits among the Svans, giving the facts in more detailed form.

"Each community," writes Mr. Teptsov, "puts on every member a specific stamp. Everyone who has visited Svanetia is able to discern without any difficulty, for example, an inhabitant of Ushkul from that of Mulakh, or an inhabitant of Mulakh from that of Mestia, etc. The man from Ushkul is of dark complexion, slim, tall, alert, and a poet at heart. The resident of Mestia is the typical representative of North Russia, a native of the Iaroslav department, with the specific shovel-like beard and with smiling, restless eyes. The man from Mulakh is pure Little Russian (Ukrainian), not only by his appearance, but also in character and the manner of his life. . . . The representative of Lakhmul is of the Jewish type; the Svans themselves regard the inhabitants of Lakhmul as Jews. The people of Chubukhevi are either of Gypsy or Mongol type. Finally, the residents of Etseri have conserved the traits of the Georgian type. So that the existence of a specific original type of Svans," adds the author, "is a myth. This is clear to everyone who has had a chance to visit Svanetia."

144 A similar opinion concerning the physical traits of the Svans is expressed by Dr. G. Radde, the investigator of the Caucasus and the first director of the Caucasian Museum in Tiflis, at present the Museum of Georgia. "When you see Svans together," writes

---

[4] Bernoville: 108.
[5] Verst—the Russian measure of length, equal to 0.66 mile.
[6] Teptsov: a, 42-3.

Chevsur

Dr. Radde,[7] "you are convinced that neither in their head-form, 144 their physiognomy, nor their stature do they show anything strikingly typical. But, like the Georgians of Megrelia, they represent a mixed people."

On the other hand, one of the best explorers of the mountain regions of the Caucasus, the German alpinist, G. Merzbacher,[8] disagrees at the outset with the current opinion that the Svans represent a mixed people. He maintains the existence of a clear specific type among the Svans, making them easily discernible among the other groups of the Georgian nation. Later, however, he admits differences in physical types in every Svan community, seeing its cause in endogamy. He writes: "Dass man aber in jeder besonderen Gemeinde einen etwas anderen Typus ausgebildet vorfindet is durch innerheirat erklert."

According to the opinion of D. Z. Bakradze,[9] the Svans retain the physical traits of the Georgian mountaineers—the Mthiuls, the Khevsurs, and Pshavs—with the facial expression of the inhabitants of Southern Svanetia, much softer than those of the northern part of the country.

Concerning these views of the learned author, we must note that this group of Georgian Highlanders shows by no means a specific physical type, which fact is confirmed by every investigator and traveler who has come in contact with these people.

Drastic and contrary views have been expressed, especially con- 174
cerning the origin of the Khevsurs, who attracted the attention of [291]
investigators by their habits of dress—the coat of mail with crosses 114
on their garments, their arms, their manner of living, and the differences in their physical features. The current opinion in times past was to see in them the descendants of the Crusaders who, it was supposed, were driven out of Palestine after their defeat and found refuge and safety in the inaccessible mountain regions of the Caucasus. At first this theory was brought into literature by the Russian writer, A. L. Zisserman. Taking into consideration the peculiar dress of the Khevsurs—their coat of

---

[7] Radde: b, 117.

[8] Merzbacher: I, 356.

[9] Bakradze: a, 39.

174 mail with the signs of the cross and the arms—especially the
114 sabres with the inscriptions: *Solingen, Vivat Husar, Vivat Stephen Batory, Gloria Dei,* etc., Zisserman expresses in his book[10] the opinion of the possible origin of the Khevsurs from the Crusaders who found their refuge, as he thinks, in the secluded mountains of the Caucasus and intermarried with the women of the neighboring tribes and were joined by many fugitives from the other peoples of the country.

The opinions expressed by Mr. Zisserman were followed by representatives of other nations. The French investigators saw in the Georgian Khevsurs the descendants of French ancestors; the Germans, of the Germans; and the Russians, of the Russians.

Thus, for example, the French traveler, M. Taitbout de Marigny, regards the Khevsurs as the descendants of the French Crusaders, who, as he erroneously asserts, had brought Christianity to the pagan peoples of the Caucasus, an opinion which exposes his ignorance of the history of the country. As convincing "proof" of his opinion, he brings out the custom of the Khevsurs of wearing signs of the cross on their dresses, which, as he thinks, represents the crosses of the Sacred Order of Malta. Furthermore, he points out what he considers to be the presence of French family names among the Khevsurs, such as Devilete and Guillot. "On n'a, je crois, rien de très positif," writes M. Taitbout de Marigny,[11] "sur l'epoque où la christianisme fut introduit dans le Caucase et quels furent ceux qui le prêchèrent a ces peuples idolâtres. Une opinion assez commune attribue cette espèce d'apostolat à des Croisés échappés aux malheurs de leurs éxpeditions dans la Terre Sainte. La petite peuplade de Khevsur, située dans le Caucase auprès des Ossétiniens, porte sur ses habits des croix de Malte en drap rouge et sur ses boucliers de fer, elle en a de peints de la même couleur. L'on remarque aussi chez elle des noms français: tels que Devilete, Guillot."

On the other hand, the German investigator, N. A. Busch, is convinced that among the ancestors of the Khevsurs were also the German Crusaders. Discussing at first the opinion of A. L.

---

[10] Zisserman: 190, 208.

[11] Taitbout de Marigny: A, 73.

Zisserman concerning this question, he adds:[12] "Ich moechte noch 174
weiter gehen und annehmen dass unter den Vohrfahren der 114
chewsuren Deutsche gewesen sind, etwa die Nachkommen der Kreuzfaehrer. . . ." In confirmation of his opinion the author sees not only the knightly arms, but also: (1) the presence among the Khevsurs of tall blond men; (2) the veneration of the cross [778]
with manifestations reminiscent of Catholic usages; (3) the sacred beer; and (4) the silver cups with engraved Gothic buildings on them.

Analyzing the validity of the four main points brought out by the author in support of his opinion concerning the presence of German ancestry among the Khevsurs, we bring up for discussion the fourth point, which may appear to be the most convincing, that is, the preparation and use of beer by the Khevsurs.

That the Khevsurs brew beer, consume it in large quantities, [273]
and even regard it as a sacred beverage, is quite true; and that the Germans are also a beer-drinking people is also a known fact; but this circumstance cannot be used, as Mr. Busch thinks, as an indication of the possible relation of the Khevsurs and Germans to each other, because beer-brewing was known to and practiced by the ancient peoples of Asia Minor—the Sumerians and Akkadians[13]—thousands of years ago. There were three different sorts and qualities of beer known in the ancient world: the black beer, called *bilittu;* the beer of middle quality; and the beer mixed with water as the lowest quality.

From Babylonia the preparation of beer was transmitted to Egypt, where it was similarly made from barley, of which "a large quantity must have been grown; for barley bread was much in request, and the grain was also malted and beer brewed from it."[14] In addition to the method of preparing beer, it is also known that the most popular method of drinking beer among the Babylonians, Hittites, and other ancient peoples of Asia Minor was to suck the beverage with hollow reeds.[15] On many Babylonian and

---

[12] Busch: 224.

[13] Hrozny.

[14] Rawlinson: I, 83.

[15] Meyer: 55-6.

114
174
Hittite cylinder-stamps are depicted sitting men who are drinking beer in this manner from a jar placed between them. The same custom was observed by Xenophon among the ancient Armenians. So that if the Georgian Khevsurs borrowed the knowledge of beer-brewing at all it was from the ancient peoples of Asia Minor and not from the Germans of Europe.

Especially peculiar are the views of the celebrated Russian archeologist, the Countess P. S. Uvarov,[16] who visited the country of the Khevsurs in the summer of 1890 and saw, as she thinks, in the Khevsurs the "real" and "unquestionable" representatives of the historically famous *Cossacks* of the Dniepr River—the *Zaparojtsi.*

"Many times I was told," writes the author,[17] "that the Khevsurs are the descendants of the Crusaders and that the principal adornment of their dress is the cross. I think that such supposition is the result of sheer fantasy, used, to our regret, very often during the scientific investigations of the antiquities of the Caucasus, its peoples and ethnology. That the Khevsurs are not Georgians and are not of Georgian origin is for me an irrefutable fact; but in the meantime to see in them the descendants of the Crusaders is very difficult, because nothing confirms this opinion; neither the type of Khevsurs nor their character or customs. And as for their use at the present time of armor plate and the sign of the cross in their ornaments, the first is probably borrowed, not from the West but from the East (the elbow-pieces are of Oriental origin), and the second is used in the same manner as by the [302] peoples of Slavonic origin. The type of the Khevsur is rather reminiscent of a *Zaparojets* or a Scythian and Sarmatian from the Trojanic column: the same boots, the same trousers, the straight broadsword, the thick hair on the head cut in round, circular form, the same moustaches, the short beards, the virile expression of the faces, and the tress of hair of the ancient *Zaparojtsi.*"

---

[16] Uvarov: 232-3.
[17] *Ibid.*

Chevsur

A few pages further on[18] the author adds: "I do not know if 174
my supposition is correct, but it seems to me that the Khevsurs 114
in Guli, Gudani and Khakhmathi,[19] representing the central part of Khevsuria, are better, stronger, finer and nearer to the type of the *Zaparojtsi*—Scythians than the inhabitants of Shatil, among whom there seems to be noticeable another type and character."

Concerning this passage, in which the former President of the 114
Russian Archeological Society expresses her regret at the employment of fantasy by many investigators of the Caucasus and then brings out her own ideas regarding the origin of the Khevsurs, we may mention that her own theory, to our great regret, is also a work of fantasy and imagination. That the Khevsurs represent a part of the Georgian nation, we are convinced by many factors, such as their language, customs, religion, folk-lore, etc. What 302
we intend at present to discuss is one of the facts brought out by 114
the author in support of her theory of the origin of the Khevsurs 174
from Slavonic stock; that is, the custom among the Khevsurs of cutting or shaving off the hair on the head and leaving only a tress on the crown.

That this custom was practiced by the Cossacks of the Dniepr River, called *Zaparojtsi,* is clear, but there is also proof that it was practiced by the Pshavs, neighbors of the Khevsurs, by the Circassians in the northwestern part of the country, and even on the other (southern) side of the Caucasian ridge—in Transcaucasia; by the Udins of Vartashen, and also to the south beyond the Caucasus—in Asia Minor, where thousands of years ago the powerful people of the Hittites practiced the same custom.

The custom among the Khevsurs of wearing a tress of hair has been observed by many investigators who have visited these people. Thus Dr. G. Radde writes in his book:[20] "Alle Maenner waren rasirt viele rasiren den Kopf ganz, andere lassen auf dem Scheitel einen langen Schopf (*Kotschori*) stehen, noch andere lassen in wilder Unordnung das Haar wachsen."

---

[18] *Ibid.*: 236.

[19] Names of villages.

[20] Radde: C, 76.

302 The above passage is given in the French translation by
114 E. Chautre in his work, *Recherches Anthropologiques dans le*
174 *Caucase.*[21]

The custom among the Khevsurs of wearing a tress of hair on the head, called in the Georgian, *kotchori,* was formerly observed also by the Pshavs, according to A. L. Zisserman.[22] The same custom prevailed among the Circassians in the northwest and the Udins in the south. "Among some of the old men," writes A. Arutinov about the Udins,[23] "we noticed the very peculiar fashion of wearing hair on the head. They cut their hair very short or even shave the whole head, leaving on the top, near the nape of the neck (occiput), a tress of hair approximately from seven to ten centimeters in length, and sometimes reaching 195 or even 250 centimeters."

"The men crop the hair of the head quite short," writes J. V. Klaproth[24] about the Circassians, "leaving only a lock the length of a finger hanging down from the crown, which is called *haidar.*" The same custom was observed among the Circassians by the French traveler, M. Taitbout de Marigny, who, in describing the life of the Circassians, writes: "Ils se rasent la tête, comme les Turcs, ne laissant qu'une petite touffé au sommet."[25]

In addition to the above-named peoples of the Caucasus, the ancient Hittites of Asia Minor also practiced this custom. Professor Eduard Meyer describes this custom of the Hittites as it is pictured on the Egyptian stone relief in Karnak, where an Egyptian prince leads the procession of the ambassadors from Asia, among whom the Hittites may be easily recognized by their peculiar facial traits and the characteristic tress of hair (pig tail).

"Die chetiter . . . tragen niemals einen Bart," writes Professor Meyer,[26] "und ihr Haar liegt in langer, zopfartiger Straehne. . . ." Especially characteristic is the hairdress of one Hittite soldier figured in the battle of Kadesh, who "hat das Haupthaar bis auf

---

[21] Chantre: IV, 44-5.
[22] Zisserman: 228.
[23] Arutinov: 26.
[24] Klaproth: a, 322.
[25] Taitbout de Marigny: b, 272.
[26] Meyer: 12.

einen vom Hinterkopf herabhaengenden, dem chinesischen gleichen 302
Zopf abrasiert. . . ."[27] 114

From the evidence of the various investigators which we have 174
presented above, it may be seen that if we accept the opinion of Countess Uvarov that the Khevsurs of the Caucasus originated from the Cossacks of the Dniepr, we might logically assume that the Circassians, the Udins and the Hittites are also of Slavonic origin, or that all these peoples, including the Hittites, borrowed this custom from the Cossacks of the Dniepr (*Zaparojtsi*)—which, in short, is a paradox.

We think that this custom existed among the Khevsurs for many centuries before the *Zaparojtsi* made their appearance in history. In the meantime the fact of the presence of this custom among other peoples of the Caucasus besides the Khevsurs shows their possible relation with each other and points to Asia Minor as the place of origin of this custom, whence it was brought to the Caucasus. Later, in the new era, this custom could have been borrowed by the Cossacks of the Dniepr from the Circassians, who occupied the northern slopes of the Caucasian ridge and controlled the adjacent territory around the Sea of Azov and the Russian steppe,[28] whence they were gradually forced out by the newcomers into the mountains of the Caucasus, where they resided until the Russian conquest in the second half of the nineteenth century. This conquest resulted in the mass emigration of the Circassians into the lands then occupied by the Turks.

To the above mentioned factors revealing the heterogeneity in 621
the composition of the social groups among the Georgian High- 571
landers must be added the different ways and manners of adop- 788
tion as practiced by the people which made relatively easy access for foreign elements into the communities, where they were admitted as full-fledged members and in time were gradually absorbed and assimilated.

There are different ways and manners of adoption. A person can be adopted either by the whole community as such, or he may be adopted by a private family or a private person. When the

---

[27] *Ibid.*, 13.

[28] Klaproth: a, 312.

621 571 788 person is adopted by the community the procedure has a religious meaning and character. So, in order to become a member of the Pshav community, the stranger is obliged to get membership in the sanctuary (*Khati*) of the community and through this act he automatically becomes a member of the social group—the community. He has to bring the sacrifice prescribed by custom and treat all members of the community with a feast. The sacrifice consists of an ox and a sheep, which are killed in a ritualistic manner (the throat is cut, as the Hebrews of the Old Testament did, and the blood is used for sanctification—cleansing of the person by anointing, washing or rubbing) by the attendant of the sanctuary, and a quantity (*chapa*) of wine is brought as a sacrifice to the patron saint of the community and used as a supply for the feast. The feast, which is arranged in the holy precincts of the sanctuary and supplied with the sacrificed victuals, has a sacramental meaning. After this feast the stranger is admitted as a full-fledged member of the community and is put under the same marriage regulations as every native member of the group.

597 The adoption by a social group, as mentioned above, did not exclude the possibility of a private adoption, that is, the adoption of one individual by another, or the entrance of an individual into a private family as one of its members.

These people practiced different methods of adoption, such as "breast-biting," anointing with consecrated oil, hair-cutting, exchange of bullets, "silver-eating," and the custom called *zedsidze* (adoption of a son-in-law). Adoption by "breast-biting" consists in touching by the candidate with his teeth the bare breast of his prospective foster mother, the wife of the head of the family, or generally the eldest woman in the family.

This custom was practiced throughout Georgia and among other peoples of the Caucasus in past times and is still in existence. It is known under the Georgian name of *dzudzus kbena,* meaning "breast-biting."

The Svans practice a very interesting form of "breast-biting" which they call *Linturali.*[29]

---

[29] Linturali: 138.

The practice of the custom of adoption[1] in its various forms 114 shows the error of the views of many investigators who regard the mountaineers of the Caucasus, living remote from other peoples, as illustrating the evolutionary principle of social development; and who regard the communities of the Highlanders of the Caucasus as social organizations in their "embryonic state," thus conserved by their seclusion and representing "museums" of the past which are patiently awaiting the investigations of learned anthropologists and ethnologists. For example, E. D. Morgan expresses his views in a work read before the British Asiatic Society on March 19, 1888, and later printed in complete form in the Journal of the Society. Mr. Morgan's work is based on the well-known work of Professor M. Kovalevsky dealing with the customary law among the Ossets of the Caucasus, a work which was written in Russian and later edited in French translation.[30] Expounding his views, Morgan writes:[31] "In the highlands of the Caucasus, as in other mountainous regions, remnants of Aryan tribes have found it possible to subsist, though not in large numbers, preserving their independence and perpetuating customs and traditions in the highest degree interesting to the historian and philosopher. To these reference must be made if we would supply the missing link in the history of civilization, to these we should turn in order to trace the earliest dawn of juridical notions—the embryology of law."

Taking into consideration the views just cited, and turning to 114
the conditions as they really exist in the Caucasus, we see from [608]
the different methods of adoption[1] and the heterogeneity of physical 177
traits and origin, as above stated, that the social groups among the Georgian Highlanders were not secluded and closed to the stranger. The social units, whether separate communities or the whole people, are not "museums" with old, unchanging relics, but on the contrary represent, as Professor A. M. Ladishevski remarks in his work dealing with the social organization of the Circassians,[32] "laboratories" where the active work of change and transformation

---

[30] Kovalevsky, b.
[31] Morgan: 364-5.
[32] Ladishevski.
[1] [see pp15-16, cat, 116 -- Analyst]

114 is going on. Life in the illiterate communities as in the civilized
177 societies is not static but dynamic; only the tempo, the speed of change, is different—slow, hard to notice in the majority of cases in the former group, and more prompt and manifest in the latter. Even in the most secluded glacier regions of the Caucasus the people do not live in complete isolation but are in contact with other communities and peoples, creating the above-mentioned heterogeneity of physical traits and the composition of the social organization. But in spite of all this the unity of the social group among the Georgian Highlanders is unshaken and solidly established, thanks to the religious beliefs of the people and their conviction of the existence of spirits and a life beyond the grave as manifested in the cult of the dead. These are factors which replace the lack of real blood relationship and keep firmly together the different component parts as one homogeneous unit.

Chevsur
Swan

CHAPTER III

Religious Beliefs and Practices

The religion of the Georgian Highlanders penetrates the very 771 thought and actions of each individual as well as the whole community of which he is a member. Obedience to the custom is vital for the well-being not only of the person involved but of his whole community. The social group is the guaranty, the defender and the guardian of every member. The obedience to the custom has a religious obligation; its disobedience is a religious sanction.

We are not attempting at present to go into the analysis of the 114 religious beliefs and ceremonies in detail or try to explain their meaning or origin, although it offers a very interesting field of research. Only by way of information we will point out that the special works representing the scientific investigation of the primitive religion of the peoples of the Caucasus, and particularly of the Georgians, are few; and we may cite the words of the Georgian scholar, Professor M. Tseretheli[1] as clearly illustrating the situation "that Georgian paganism represents such a complicated subject for research, that science still has much to do to unravel its tangled elements." If the special works are few, the information of the general character treating the primitive religion in the Caucasus is abundant, but here also the difficulty is present that they are either scattered in different essays and monographs of ethnological, geographical, archeological, historical and general descriptive character, or they are written in languages of little access to the European reader, such as Georgian and Russian.

From the few leading works dealing specially with the primitive religion of the Georgians we have to mention as examples the works of O. V. von Wesendonk,[2] N. Marr,[3] M. Tseretheli,[4] and Javakhishvili.[5]

---

[1] Tseretheli: b.
[2] Wesendonk: a, b.
[3] Marr: a.
[4] Tseretheli: b.
[5] Javakhishvili: b.

CHEVSUR
Swan

114 Professor I. Javakhishvili of Tiflis, a well-known Georgian historian,[6] gives us a picture of the religion of pagan Georgia in the second chapter of his standard work, *A History of the Georgian Nation* (Vol. 1, Ch. 2, pp. 31-137), which is a result of his research into the customs and usages, tales and sagas of the Georgians.

771 Our aim at present is simply to review in outline form the religion of the Georgian Highlanders, principally in connection with the role which it plays in their legal life.

Surveying the religious institutions and beliefs of the Georgian Highlanders, we notice a marked mixture of Christianity and primitive beliefs. Besides the symptoms of Christian teaching, such as the names of saints, the belief in angels, the conduct of various Christian ceremonies although in distorted form, they believe in the supernatural, not as the Christian Church understands and interprets it as one identity, but as many spirits endowed with anthropomorphic qualities. The supernatural powers, the spirits, are discriminated by the people, not only according to their power, but also according to their inclinations. Some of them are regarded as the protectors of hunters, others of herds and husbandry, and a third group are the benefactors of thieves, robbers, etc. The people believe that these "spiritual beings are held to affect or control events in the material world and man's life here and hereafter."[7] Besides these spirits representing supernatural beings, the Georgian Highlanders believe also in the existence of spirits representing "souls of individual creatures, capable of continued existence after the death or destruction of the body."[8]

The religious beliefs of the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes are almost identical, conserved in purest and most complete form by the Pshavs and the Khevsurs, and in a state of change and transformation by the Tushes, who are gradually giving up their old customs under the influence of their cultured kinsmen of the Lowlands. The religion of the Svans is similar in the principal things, but different in details from that of the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes.

---

[6] Tseretheli: b, 28.
[7] Tyler: I, 426.
[8] *Ibid.*

Chevsur
Swan

Up to the present time it is impossible to determine with cer- 771
tainty what kind of religion the Pshavs and Khevsurs profess.[9] 776
While respecting the cross, St. George, the apostles Peter and Paul, and Archangel Michail, at the same time they worship such gods as Anatori, Nakharela, Pirkushi, Kopala, Iakhsari, and many others. These tribes were converted to Christianity by some Georgian preacher, but having no support from anybody, the religion grew weak owing to the ignorance of this half-savage people. I am convinced of this by the prayers which their *dekanozi*[10] say and which are taken from the Church, and by their veneration of some of our saints. The Khevsurs do not believe that God is one identity. They have the following gods: the god of East; the god of West; the god of souls; Christ-God; the small god; and the great god. Besides these, they also worship *Adgilis-deda,* meaning the mother of the place; *Mukhis angelozi,* the angel of the oak; *Goris angelozi,* the angel of the mountain; *Unjis angelosi,* the angel of property; *Did-gori,* big mountain; *Thethri-Georgi,* White George; and others. From the above stated it is clear "that the Khevsurs created in their imagination the special angel-protectors to whom the Pshavs pay very little esteem, but in their turn they worship *Lasharis-jvari; Thamar-mepe,* the queen Thamar; *Kopale,* and others. Incidentally, it should be noted that the Pshavs regard as saints Queen Thamar and her son, called *Lasha Georgi* or *Lashiani Georgi* (flapmouthed George).

This same mixture of primitive beliefs and Christianity prevails also among the Svans. The Svans admit the existence of separate gods for every people on earth, for the Mohammedan peoples as well as for their neighbors and kinsmen, the Georgians of Lechkum and Ratcha, and for themselves.[11] They also believe in the existence of special angels of the forests and mountains and in the protectors of game. Accordingly, when they go into the mountains and woods on hunting expeditions, the Svans pray to their imagined local deities of the country or place in question, asking their co-operation and the success of their enterprise.

---

[9] Eristov: 96.
[10] *Dekanozi*—an attendant of the sanctuary.
[11] Gulbiani: 88.

771 776 Consequently, if successful in hunting, the Svan considers it his duty to bring, first of all, a thank-offering to the deity—the protector of game—in order to appease him and secure his help in the future.[12] The Svans usually bring their sacrifices to highly situated places. To insure the success of individuals as well as the prosperity of the country as a whole, the Svan generally subscribes to the protection of the local deity. In spite of such opinions, the Svans have a notion of the Christian Trinity, although obscure. They were converted to Christianity, as were the Khevsurs, Pshavs, and Tushes, in the historic past, and therein may lie the historical explanation of the fall and degeneration of Christianity in Svanetia as well as elsewhere in the Georgian Highlands. [775] Historical records clearly demonstrate that the Svans and their land formed a part of the Georgian kingdom.[13] It is known that from the time of Queen Tamar's father the Georgian chronicles divided the whole of Georgia into seven parts according to the seven territories inhabited by the Georgian nation; and in the formation of these seven provinces, Svanetia was included.

Besides their political affiliation, the Svans had other ties with Georgia in their religious life. The great number of ruined and ancient churches, containing numerous preserved manuscripts, icons, crosses, etc., proves that efforts were made by the kings of Georgia to spread and strengthen the Christian faith in [346] Svanetia. The number of churches there is very large; they are found even in the most insignificant villages; in some there are as many as five or six.[14] They are especially numerous in Free Svanetia, many half-dilapidated and ruined churches and sacred places where, according to tradition, churches once stood. In Ushkul, for example, there are twenty such ruins.

795 Examining the old Georgian ordinances, called *gujaras,* we find that the Georgian clergy exercised a great influence upon Svanetia, where it appears Christianity was at that time solidly established. The church of Svanetia stood under the rule of the Abkhazian,

---

[12] The details concerning this subject are brought out in the chapter on Contract and Group Solidarity.

[13] Bakradze: a, 29.

[14] *Ibid.*, 34.

or Imerian, Catholics,[18] and later under the Bishop of Lechkum, whose residence was in the village of Tsageri on the river Tskenis-tskali. The priests in Svanetia were in the majority of cases natives of the country who were installed in their office by the special ordination from the above-mentioned Georgian clerical dignitaries. But when this union of Svanetia with the neighboring Georgian provinces was interrupted, owing to political causes, the church of Svanetia was left alone without any spiritual support and guidance; and taking, in addition, the illiteracy of the people and the ignorance of the native priests, it is not difficult to understand the motives of deterioration of the Christian Church in Svanetia. Here happened precisely the same thing that took place among the Khevsurs, Pshavs, and Tushes: Christianity fell into degradation, and the omitted and forgotten things were replaced by the fantasy of the people with primitive beliefs and practices; creating, instead of Christianity, a mixture of Christianity with Primitive religion. In spite of this confusion in their religion, the Svans up until the present time, conserve in distorted form the whole ancient order of the church services, have their own priests, called *bapi* or *papi*, and jealously guard their churches and holy images.[19]

The desertion and decline of Christianity, among the Svans and other groups of the Georgian Highlanders had a place also among the other ethnic groups of the Caucasus. The same causes created strikingly similar results. Thus the Circassians, occupying the northwestern portion of the Caucasian peninsula and the northeastern coast of the Black Sea, preserved the remains of the Christian religion as did the Georgian Highlanders. The Circassians, prior to their acceptance of the Mohammedan religion, were Christians, and later their religion presented a mixture of Christian, Mohammedan and Primitive rites. Being nominally Mohammedans, they maintained their veneration of the cross; celebrated, though in distorted fashion, the Lord's Supper and other practices reminiscent of the rites of the Greek Orthodox Church. Persons who lived among them have furnished information about the dis-

---

[18] Bakradze: a, 34.
[19] *Ibid.*

Swan

795 torted Christian rites and the obsolete and ruined places of worship. The ruins of the old churches found in the country of the Abkhazians were surprising to European investigators by their beauty and the magnificence of their architecture.

In addition to the ruins of churches, many other remains of Christianity have been preserved by the people, such as the various Christian rites practiced by the Circassians.

778 The religious practices of the Circassians bear a close resemblance to the religious rites and festivals practiced by the Georgian Highlanders. Another point of resemblance between these two groups is their veneration of trees.[17] The places of worship in the Georgian Highlands are usually situated in or near a wood which is the property of the church and regarded as sacred, and from [313] which the Svan will permit no one to cut down a single tree. These woods usually surround the ruins of ancient Svan churches.[18] As an illustration, the Russian investigator, I. A. Bartolomei, mentions the sacred forest in the community of Kali in Svanetia. "I saw the enclosure of a small monastery surrounded by a dense forest," writes Mr. Bartolomei.[19] "This was the monastery of St. Quirik, revered as almost the greatest sanctuary in Free Svanetia . . . . Incidentally, it should be noted that the community of Kali complains a great deal for want of a proper forest. In reply to my remark that the place in which we were traveling was covered with ancient trees, the guides told me that this belonged to the church and no one was allowed to cut a single branch from it for fear of God's wrath. If this were done, the people believed that He would send hail of enormous size to punish them."

As Bartolomei says, the want of wood and the scarcity of trees in Kali likewise attracted the attention of D. Z. Bakradze to the superb forests belonging to the monastery of St. Quirik. He, too, writes about this, noting the obedience of the people to religious rules. "These forests," says Bakradze,[20] "consist of pine trees and are kept in sacred esteem by the natives, so that in spite of the

---

[17] Chursin, g.
[18] Teptsov: a, 34.
[19] Bartolomei: 151-3.
[20] Bakradze: a, 51.

Chevsur
Swan

need of timber in Kali they are preserved undamaged to the present time." 778

Information of similar character concerning these sacred woods in the Georgian Highlands is supplied by almost every traveler and explorer who has visited these regions.

The maintenance of the sacred woods and the veneration of trees was a common trait among all Georgians in past times. At present the churches and monasteries in the Lowlands of Georgia are surrounded by magnificent old trees which grow unmolested. Even the places of worship may bear the name of a tree. For example, the well-known monastery in Megrelia is called "the monastery of Tchkon-didi," meaning "the monastery of the Great Oak," from the Megrelian words *tchkoni* (oak) and *didi* (large or great). I myself remember that during my visits in the villages of Megrelia during summer vacations I was told many times that I must avoid breaking the branches of a tree, because this is a sin (*tsoda*) in Megrelia and that a tree feels and suffers as a man does.

It should be noted that these beliefs connected with trees and woods are not peculiar to the Georgians only, but are shared by the other peoples of the Caucasian peninsula—by the Circassians, for example. Thus the French traveler, M. Taitbout de Marigny, relates concerning his visit to the sacred woods in Circassia:[21] "Ver le soir nous risquâmes une promenade dans une bois sacré qui est a une petite distance du rivage. Une croix grossiérement faite, et dont la partie supérieure à la form d'un trèfle, consacre ce lieu a la religion; et on n'oserait y couper des arbres, ni même toucher, aux objets qu'on y vient déposer. Le signe du christianisme qui y est conservé leur a été transmis par lèurs ancêtres. Ils ignorent ce qu'il représente . . . ." The sacred groves of the Circassians are also described in the works of J. S. Bell[22] and J. A. Longworth.[23]

Every community of the Georgian Highlands has its place of 778
worship—the sanctuary called *Khati,* meaning in Georgian, "holy 246

---

[21] Taitbout de Marigny: b, 306.
[22] Bell.
[23] Longworth.

Chevsur
Swan

778 image," although in the majority of cases there is no image of 346 any kind present in the sanctuary. The word *khati* designates a holy image (icon), and also the whole place of worship (sanctuary); moreover, it is used as the name and personification of [621] the deity itself. Besides being a place of worship, the *Khati* is the center of the social and political life of the community.

The various Khatis are believed to possess different forces: some of them are regarded as more powerful than others and are called *magari Khati*, meaning "strong image," from the Georgian words magari (strong) and Khati (holy image). The people think that the *Khatis* differ from each other not only in power but also in quality. Consequently, some of the *Khatis* are approached only in special cases. For example, there are *Khatis* which are regarded as protectors of the shepherds; other *Khatis* protect hunters and farmers; and there are even *Khatis* for the protection of thieves and robbers, to whom the latter pray for help and give thank offerings after a successful theft or a work of brigandage. And we find among the Khevsurs that the *Khati* called *Sameba-Tsrolis-Khado*, situated in the village of Ukhand-Khado, is regarded as the special protector of hunters and robbers, who give a part of their spoils to this *Khati* as a thank offering for the success of their expeditions. This *Khati* is believed to possess also the power to make barren women fruitful. The *Khati* of Gudani, which has the surname of "God's leader of hosts," is viewed as the protector against thieves and beasts of prey and as the healer of human and animal diseases. The *Khati* of Karatis Jvari is supposed to exercise great power over various evil spirits.

Among the Svans the leading sanctuary is that of St. Quirike.

The principal sanctuaries (*Khatis*) of the Khevsurs are four: (1) *Gudanis-Jvari;* (2) *Khakhmatis-Jvari;* (3) *Sanebis-Jvari;* and (4) *Karatis-Jvari.*

The names of the sanctuaries originated mostly from the names of the villages where they are situated, with the addition of the word *jvari.* This word means "a cross." One exception, however, in Khevsuria is the *Karatis-Jvari,* which is situated in the village of Likoki. Incidentally, the Ossets also call their places of worship and reverence and the ruins of old churches found in

their country by the name of *dzvari,* which is derived from the 778
Georgian word *jvari* (cross) and indicates the influence which the 346
Georgian Church rendered in the propagation of Christianity among the Ossets. Mr. R. D. Eristov[24] gives in tabular form the names of all the sanctuaries and the number of *dekanozis* and *khutsis* in Khevsuria. According to his information, at that time (1854) there were in Khevsuria fifteen sanctuaries (*Khatis*), with two *dekanozis*[a] and twelve *khutsis.*

The sanctuary of *Lashris-jvari,* dedicated to St. George, was built in Pshavia, according to the Georgian historian Prince Vakhusht, by the son of the famous Georgian Queen Thamar, King George IV, called Lasha. Describing the country of the Pshavs, Prince Vakhusht writes:[25] "Here in Pshavia is a church built by King Lasha in which there are preserved a great number of gold and silver holy images (icons) and crosses, vessels and books. They call it *Lashris-jvari* and keep it in great respect. No one among the Pshavs and Khevsurs who has acquired gold or silver has a right to use it for himself, but must present it to the *Lashris-jvari.*"

Queen Thamar and her son Georgi Lasha were held in such high esteem by the people that they were deified and the churches which, it is supposed, were built by them were dedicated to them and given their names — *Lashris-jvari* (the cross of Lasha) and the *Khati Thamar-mepe* (King Tamar—the word *mepe* in the Georgian language means king).

The sanctuaries (*Khatis*) of the Khevsurs and Pshavs are built of slates without mortar, near the village, and usually in the midst of woods which are considered sacred—usually old and luxurious oak, plane, ash, and beech trees. The *Khati* represents a small square room without windows and is also called *Krvivi.* In the middle of the *Khati* is sometimes placed a cross, and in a heap on the floor are different objects representing offerings made by the people. But the most important thing in the *Khati* is the standard (*drosha*) possessed by every sanctuary and exercising a great influence upon the people, who view it with eyes of

---

[24] Eristov: a, 109.
[25] Vakhusht: 109-110.
[a] [i.e., attendants -- Analyst]

778 reverence and fear, and in time of war the people follow their
346 *drosha* without hesitation in risking their lives. The *drosha* is a silver-set pole with a silver ball (*baragchi*) at the top, upon which is fixed an iron spear. Around the *drosha* is wound a piece of cloth called *sakadrisi*, meaning worthy.[26] Instead of an iron spear, the *drosha* may have also a cross, plain or with crucifix.[27] "The *drosha* presents a kind of sign or standard," writes Uvarov, "consisting of a tall wooden pole with gilded silver balls on the top, upon which is affixed a cross. Below the cross are attached simple cotton handkerchiefs instead of a banner. The crosses on two *droshas* in the village of Gudani are of gilded silver and present a crucifix of poor workmanship." Some small bells are attached to the *droshas*.[28] Outside the *Khati*, on a rudely hewn post hangs the church bell.

church bell.

Nobody is permitted to enter the *Khati* except the *dekanozi*, the attendants.

Besides the Khati, there are other buildings on the sacred grounds which are used for various purposes in the religious proceedings of the people: (1) a low, dark hut surrounded by a stone wall, which serves as a storage place for the vessels used during the brewing of the beer, drinking cups, etc., all being the property of the *Khati* and regarded as sacred; (2) a second hut which is used as the brewery and which contains enormous flat copper pots with inclined sides. Some of them are so large that they are capable of holding thirty Russian puds[29] of barley, from which the beer is made. Beer is regarded as a sacred drink and is prepared by specially appointed attendants of the *Khati*, the *dasturis*. (3) The third cabin is used by the *dekanozi* as a lodging place during the special holidays and is called *darbazi*. (4) The fourth building, which serves as the meeting-hall, is called *sastumro*, meaning the guestroom, from the Georgian words, *stumari* (guest). It is also called *sajaro*, meaning "for the people," from the word *jari* (army, multitude of people).

---

[26] Eristov: a, 99.
[27] Uvarov: 234-5.
[28] Khakhanov: a, 45.
[29] Pud—Russian measure of weight; 1 pud = 31.11 pounds.

Besides the above-mentioned buildings on the sacred grounds of 778
the *Khati*[a] there are also: (1) an altar put together from stones. 346
On the altar is placed a cup, and around it are placed different 782
objects, such as beads, small looking-glasses, pieces of metal, money, etc., which are brought by the people as offerings to the *Khati*. (2) Near the altar is a pit covered with stone slabs and having a quadrangular aperture through which runs the blood of sacrificed animals, the skulls of which are hung or set up on the branches of the trees nearby. (3) The stone pillar about one and one-half metres high, with a square base and gradually inclined forward to the flat top, so that the pillar represents the form of a truncated pyramid. Upon it is found a great number of horns of different shapes and kinds from wild animals which have been killed and brought as thank-offerings to the *Khati* by hunters. During the special religious celebrations and festivals, the candles are fixed upon it and burned in honor of the *Khati*.

The whole ground occupied by the *Khati*, the other buildings, and the sacred grove is surrounded by a stone wall. Women, who are regarded as unclean, have no right to enter the walled precincts of the *Khati*. During the religious festivals and celebrations, which present an occasion for plenty of eating and still more drinking, the women are served outside the *Khati* walls, where they have a good time in their own way.

These sanctuaries (*Khatis*)[a] have special attendants who are the 793
guardians of the material belongings of the sanctuaries as well as the faithful conservers of all traditions and the executors of the different ceremonies which constitute their religion. The number of these attendants is considerable and each of them has a special name and special duties to perform.

Although having the same names, the prerogatives of the attendants of the *Khati* in the different communities are not the same. The attendant, for example, called *dasturi* has more obligations in one community than in another; the same is true of the other servants of the *Khati*: the *dekanozi*, *khutsi*, and *khevis-beri*. The name has not the same equivalent of rank. Consequently the accounts of various authors concerning the different categories of the attendants of the *Khati* and their functions are not in accord-

[a] [see p. 25 ff.--Analyst]

773 ance with each other. So the information given by the two best experts of Khevsur conditions, R. D. Eristov and N. A. Khudadov, is contradictory in many essential points.

This situation is lengthily discussed by everyone who has written anything about the Khevsurs and their religious beliefs. These writers deplore the disorder existing in the hierarchy of the attendants of the *Khati* and try to bring order out of apparent confusion. We may be justified in thinking, on the other hand, that all this endeavor to bring "order out of confusion" is not only unnecessary but misleading and defective, as unreal and as an artificial notion. That the attendants with the same name have different prerogatives in the various Khevsur communities is not difficult to understand if we take into consideration the existing conditions of the country, where there is not a state but where every community is a social unit unto itself; and to expect to find under such circumstances, where, besides, the people live by traditions only, ignorant of the written records, a rigid ecclesiastical hierarchy with punctually defined duties and obligations for everyone of the attendants, is a futile and superfluous effort.

The attendants of the *Khati* are known under the names of *khutsi, dekanozi, dasturi, mnate, shulta,* and *khevis-beri;* besides these attendants, there are also the servants of the *Khati* who do not perform any religious ceremonies.[30] They are: *mekhate, medroshe,* and *mezanduri.* The *mekhate* is the principal person in the latter category of servants. The *medroshe* is the standard-bearer, from the Georgian word *drosha* (standard). The *mezanduri* has in his custody the property of the *Khati.* The *khutsi* is the priest of the *Khati.* He is appointed to his office, not by other attendants of the sanctuary or by any mortals, but, as the people believe, is chosen by the *Khati* himself through the medium of the *kadagi* (the diviner) of the community, who reveals the supernatural appointment. Usually the illness of one member of the family or of one of the relatives of the future *khutsi* serves as the motive for his election. The *kadagi* declares that the illness is sent by the *Khati* as an expression of his will to see the candidate in-

---

[30] Eristov: a, 102.

stalled as *khutsi*. The fulfillment of this wish of the *Khati* has as 793
a consequence the recovery of the sick person, but if there is no such recovery the explanation is that the *Khati* has refused to accept the candidate.

At once, after his appointment, the new *khutsi* brings to the *Khati* an ox as a sacrifice.

The *khutsi* is regarded by the people as a sacred person. His 793
duties consist in saying the prayers, performing marriage cere- 778
monies, bestowing the benediction upon the people during the religious festivals and gatherings, killing the sacrificial animals and conducting funerals and commemorative ceremonies for the dead. In the custody of the *khutsi* are also, in many sanctuaries, the sacred silver vessels of the *Khati* which are, in many cases, worth a fortune, amounting in value sometimes to as much as twenty thousand rubles in silver,[31] and which are kept concealed in dug-out holes. According to Eristov, the *dasturi,* and not the *khutsi,* are the custodians of these silver vessels. The *khutsi* also takes care of the community standard (the drosha), which, as we have said, is so highly esteemed by the people that when the *khutsi* carries it out of the *Khati* on special occasions and shows it to the people, everyone goes down on his knees in deep reverence and shouts repeatedly the words of the *khutsi:* "Victory to the Lord and His servants!" In the silence which ensues the *khutsi* takes a cup of beer, and keeping it lifted high in his right hand, pronounces a curse against every thief who has taken anything from the treasury of the *Khati* or belonging to the community. Simultaneously he pours out the sacred beer on the ground and says: "So may be emptied the house, family and fortune of the culprit!"

The duties of the *khutsi* differ from those of the *dekanozi.*[32] Al- 793
though they both take part in the religious celebrations, the *khutsi* has no right to kill the sacrificial animals brought by the people. But the *khutsi* has the advantage of conducting funeral ceremonies, in which the *dekanozi* does not mix. Although the *khutsis* are subordinate to the *dekanozis,* there are also *khutsis* who perform both

---

[31] Eristov: a, 99.
[32] *Ibid.,* 102.

793 offices together. The office of *khutsi* is attained in the same way as that of *dekanozi,* through the *kadagi,* with the difference that the candidate for the position of *khutsi* must learn by heart beforehand all prayers which are necessary in conducting funeral ceremonies. The *khutsi* as well as the *dekanozi* is expected to be an example of moral purity.

Besides the appointment through the *kadagi,* there is another way for a *dekanozi* to attain the post; that is, by falsehood and bribery. Everyone who has the wish to become a *dekanozi* pretends to be ill and then tells everyone that in his dreams he saw a saint who predicted to him that he would not recover from his illness unless he consecrated himself to the service of the *Khati* (desired name is given) as a *dekanozi.* After this the self-styled sick man brings an ox or a cow into the *Khati,* where he wishes to be the *dekanozi.* The *dekanozi* and *khutsi* of the *Khati* meet for the occasion and kill the sacrificial animal brought by the candidate, who treats them all and gives the solemn oath to abstain in the future from eating pork, eggs and all kinds of poultry, and to eat only the meat of horned cattle. After this ceremony he is regarded as lawfully installed in the post of *dekanozi.* Or he may attain the office by bribing the other *dekanozis.*

The *dekanozis* may also be *kadagis,* who are mostly nervous persons, with an inclination to epilepsy.[33] There is no agreement of opinion among the authors concerning the precise duties of the *dekanozi.* Eristov, Khudadov, and Dr. Radde regard the *khutsi* as subordinate to the *dekanozi.* On the other hand, Urbneli, G. Merzbacher, and others think that the office of *khutsi* is higher than that of the *dekanozi.* According to Professor A. Khakhanov,[34] the *dekanozi* is the same person as the *khevis-beri,* representing the highest rank among the attendants of the *Khati* (among the Tushes), and after him in rank are the *khutsi,* and last, the *mnate,* who executes the orders of the *khevis-beri.* He kills the sacrificial animals after they are blessed by the *dekanozi.* He also watches the property of the *Khati,* consisting of flocks of sheep, gardens, and other property of the sanctuary, and on special days of religious celebrations and festivals he is the head steward and generously 793 entertains the people with wine from the garden of the *Khati*. Furtred, the *mnate* is obliged to take care of the offerings which the people bring to the *Khati*, such as sheep, wine, hens, belts, small bells, etc.

---

[33] Eristov: 101.
[34] Khakhanov: a, 44-5.

Among the Khevsurs and Pshavs, the *shulta* holds a position similar to the Tush *mnate*. The *shultas* are watchmen and workers for the *Khati*. They are chosen every year from the male members of the community by the *khutsi* and the *dekanozi*. The *shultas* supervise and take active part in the field work on the grounds belonging to the *Khati*, store away into granaries (*begeli*) the harvested crop. For their work they receive the straw of the barley as a reward. Among the Pshavs, the *shultas* also brew beer, a function performed by the *dasturi* in Khevsuria.

The attendants of the *Khati* known under the Iranic name of *dasturi* are beer-brewers and cooks of the *Khati* in Khevsuria. They are appointed by the *khutsi* from members of the community for a certain period, or only for the time of the holiday.

Beer is regarded by the Khevsurs as the sacred beverage and its [273] preparation is accomplished by special rules and regulations. During the beer-brewing the *dasturis* are obliged to go barefooted, without hat or belt, must not leave the precincts of the *Khati*,[4] say not a word, and must not turn their backs toward the *Khati*.

The duties of Pshav *dasturis* are greater and more difficult than those of the Khevsurs. The Pshav *dasturis* are required to watch the sanctuary during the whole year. They are chosen from every home in the village and serve for one year. Thus, if the village consists of one hundred homes, each home will have the opportunity of furnishing a *dasturi* only once in a hundred years.

The Pshav *dasturi* under no circumstances has the right during his year of service to return home or have relations with his wife. He has no right to talk with anyone but the *dekanozi*. His food consists of coarse black bread and water. To get the bread he takes wheat from the granary of the *Khati* (called *begeli*), brings it in the *Khati's* mill, and from the flour he bakes a loaf in hot ashes. The thick, heavy cakes are called *khmiadi*. The *dasturi* must keep himself clean, take a bath every week in the river nearby,

[4] [i.e., sanctuary; see cat. 116, p 25 ff -- Analyst]

Chevsur
Swan

793 whither he goes by a special pathway which cannot be used by anyone but him. He must take the baths, regardless of weather or the time of year.

All the above-mentioned attendants of the *Khati* have their office either for a certain period of time, as the *shulta* and *dasturi*, or for life, as the *khutsi* and *dekanozi*. None of these duties is hereditary. Besides the above mentioned dignitaries of the sanctuary, there is one more, called the *khevis-beri*, whose post is hereditary, and if he dies without issue his place is filled by the *khutsis, dekanozis* and *dasturis*. According to Professor A. Khakhanov, the duty of the *khevis-beri* is not hereditary among the Tushes, but the official is chosen for life. Incidentally, it should be mentioned that Professor Khakhanov calls almost all attendants of the Tush Khati, *khevis-beri*. This word means, in English translation, "the elder of the defile," and is formed from two Georgian words: *khevi* (gorge or defile) and *beri* (monk or elder).

The people hold the *khevis-beri* in the greatest respect. He is the loyal guardian of the *Khati* and the preserver of the old traditions of the community. His duties were, as Mr. Urbneli thinks, of a purely political character. The *khevis-beris* were appointed by the Georgian kings, and only later, with the breaking of the close ties (owing to political causes) between the Lowlands—center of administration and culture—and the high mountain regions, were the duties of the *khevis-beri* gradually transformed from civil to religious character. The same opinion is expressed by Professor Khakhanov.[35]

346
778 If, after this review of the places of worship and their attendants among the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes, we turn to Svanetia, we notice that a Svan church is usually a small structure built of roughly-hewed stones with a roof of thin planks. In architecture the Svan churches resemble ordinary houses. However, they are usually set apart from the dwellings, surrounded by woods, and have a stone enclosure, with a church bell suspended from a pole nearby. (Usually, on the outer walls saints and mythical heroes are pictured in the Persian style.) The interior of the churches is dark and small; the largest can accommodate no more

---

[35] Khakhanov: a, 44.

than eighty persons. Rods are stretched from the ceiling to support 346 the horns of wild goats and jaw-bones of sheep which have been 778 offered as sacrifices; these relics are so numerous that they almost fill the churches, especially those in Free Svanetia. In the corners are piles of various objects, such as arrows, helmets, pieces of broken glass, and what not. Especially interesting are the wooden cages with birds carved out of wood and hanging from the ceiling. All objects preserved in the churches are regarded as sacred. The walls inside the churches are covered with images of the saints and sometimes pictures of the kings with crowns on their heads. Characteristic of every Svan church is the large wooden cross fixed in the farther part of the church on a square elevation. Such crosses are covered with thin silver plates representing small icons (holy images). Similar crosses are also found in the churches of Dadian Svanetia, in Ilori, and in Ratcha.[36] All these churches possess, according to Bakradze, a large number of holy images, crosses and sacred books, especially those in Upper Svanetia, comprising the communities of Mujal, Mesti, Kali, and Ushkul.

The horns of animals sacrificed as thank-offerings, are preserved in the churches, such large were piles of these horns in a [782] church in the village of Chubiani "that it was necessary to count them by thousands."[37]

The Svan churches, with all their archeological treasures as 793 well as their worthless objects, such as broken glass, earthenware, jaw-bones of sacrificed animals, etc., were jealously guarded by the native priests (*bap* in Free Svanetia and *pap* in Dadian Svanetia). The word *pap*, or *bap*, is borrowed from the Megrelian language, in which a priest is called *papa*. The *paps* have their assistants, called *mtavar* and *dikvnar*.

The office of the *pap* is not hereditary, because anyone may attain it by fulfilling all the necessary preparations, but in the meantime the son of a *pap* has special privileges in following his father in the office without being required to make any special preparation. The *paps* came from the lower class of society — the

---

[36] Bakradze: a, 36

[37] Radde: a, 112-14.

783 commoners. The people of the nobility are regarded as degraded if they take the office of *pap*.

Everyone who desires to become a *pap* begins his preparation in boyhood, remaining in training for many years. The pupil serves the *pap* as his master: he cooks for him, does all his housework, etc. In return, the *pap* teaches his apprentice the church songs, prayers and readings from sacred books, which are far from being correct, because the *paps* themselves are usually ignorant of the meaning of the books they read and the prayers they say. The reading is usually mechanical, and one passage is mixed with another. When the young man is through with the training and has acquired the necessary skill and knowledge to be a *pap*, he makes his tutor a present of an ox or a cow, and on the appointed day he is ordained for duty. The consecration takes place in the church; the candidate kisses the holy images and the altar, and the *paps* sprinkle him with holy water while reading the prayers. In former times the installation of a new *pap* could take place only by permission of the church dignitaries of the Georgian Church who resided in Tsageri and Tsaishi, but later this was abandoned, and the consecration was performed by the *paps* themselves. This fact made the attainment of the office of *pap* very easy and is in turn responsible for the large number of churchmen in Svanetia. Thus, in the community of Ushkul, D. Z. Bakradze[38] found thirteen *paps*, and according to A. Khakhanov,[39] the number of *paps* in some villages reached fifteen. In the meantime, in the whole of Free Svanetia I. A. Bartolomei[40] found only one real priest of the Georgian Church (in the community of Mulakhi) who had the necessary knowledge and preparation for the performance of his duties.

The *paps* in Svanetia do not wear any distinctive clothing and are not distinguishable in this respect from the ordinary people of the community. Only the *paps* of Ushkul dress themselves and let their beards grow in the manner of the priests of the Georgian Church. The *pap* carries arms, as is customary throughout the

---

[38] Bakradze: a, 48.
[39] Khakhanov: i, 115.
[40] Bartolomei: 200.

Caucasus, which are removed—all except the dagger—when enter- 793
ing a church.

Although the *paps*[1] are ignorant and mostly illiterate, yet they [795]
render great service to their country and their people. They have preserved many objects of great archeological and scientific value and have hindered the spreading of Mahommedan teaching in the country by upholding the Christian faith, although in a distorted and mutilated form.

The *paps* conduct services in the churches, perform wedding and funeral ceremonies, baptize children, kill the sacrificial animals, and see to the punctual observance by the people of the established holidays.

The Svans have numerous holidays created by religious and 796
climatic conditions. Thanks to the high elevation of the country 782
in the Alpine regions of the Caucasus, the cold winter lasts for half a year, and only during the remaining six months is work carried on in the open. But in spite of such a short time, the Svans work only four days a week, and the other three—Friday, Saturday, and Sunday—are passed in rest, counting as holidays. On these days no one is allowed to work; he is permitted only to hunt. The people believe that in case of disobedience of this rule, not only the guilty person but his whole community will be severely punished by a pestilence, a bad harvest, hail or other mischief. Therefore, in order to avoid the danger in the summer months of July and August, when the fields are full of ripening grain, every man in the village is obliged to take a public oath by which he solemnly promises to abstain from any kind of work on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Anyone who is found guilty of disobeying this rule is obliged to pay a fine amounting to from one to three rubles. The money is used to cover communal expenses, such as religious festivals, sacrifices, and other items. Besides these three holidays, the Svans are forbidden during the months of May and June to make cheese or to eat any food prepared from milk on Fridays.

In addition to observing holidays in order to insure a good harvest, the people bring sacrifices to God almost every Sunday during the months of July and August. These public sacrifices are

[1] [i.e., Swan priests; see cat. 116, pp 35-37 -- Analyst]

Chevsur

796 known among the Svans as *litbkhli*, the procedure of which is as
782 follows: the people of one or two villages unite and buy an ox or a cow and a few sheep, which are killed in the churchyard. After the church service the boiled meat is put in large troughs with short legs, called *ladrula tabag*. Some of the men put the troughs of meat on their shoulders while others are praying together, asking God to send them a good harvest. The prayer is as follows in the Svan language:

> *"Didab, dideba Gmertza! didab u apkheda, madl u apkheda; khosha Gerbet, si laneshd nai, ka atkabun nishgvel dabars skarkhal i khola haer; ka ankabun nai i nishgvei kumash knola masig, eshu knvai didab apkheda."*

In English translation the prayer reads:

> "Praise, praise God! The praise be given, the thanks be given (to Thee). Omnipotent God, be merciful to us; preserve our fields from hail and bad air; shield us and our herds from the evil disease. Many praises be given to Thee!"

At least one member from every home in the village or villages taking part in the ceremony is obliged to be present at the celebration of the sacrifice.

After the prayer, everyone sits down and the feasting begins. Everything is eaten up and the remaining bones are carefully collected and burned on the spot.

Besides the three weekly holidays, the Svans have many others during the year which diminish still further the number of working days.

796 The Pshavs observe their principal holidays in the sanctuaries of *Lashris-jvari* and *Thamar-mepe*. Among the Khevsurs the principal annual holiday is celebrated in the month of july and is called *atengena*. Other holidays observed in the sanctuaries are: *Khakhmatis-jvari*, which lasts for two or three days, and *Gudanis-jvari*. In the other sanctuaries a number of holidays is observed annually. Special holidays and religious festivals took place at certain appointed times in the year. The *dekanozis* take care of the exactness of their execution. These holidays are of paramount interest and importance to the people. As we stated at the begin-

ning of this chapter, religion with the Georgian Highlanders held 796
a sustaining and regulating place in the life of the community. The various and numerous religious rules were observed and executed without any hesitation.

In the celebration of holidays in the leading sanctuaries, not 796
only the natives but their neighbors (even the Mohammedans) 563
take part. Thus, at the festival of the *Lashris-jvari,* at the end of July, known as *lashroba,* or *Lashris-jvaroba,* there are present, besides the Pshavs, Tushes, Khevsurs, Mahommedan Kists, Georgians from Kartli and Kakleti, and others. This fact was observed by the French investigator, Baron de Baye,[41] during the religious celebrations in the monastery of Alaverdi in Kakhetia. The religious festivals in the cathedral of Alaverdi are described in detail by A. L. Zisserman.[42]

The Khevsurs come to these festivals wearing their best clothes 796
and arms, and bring animals for sacrifice. Visitors who have 782
given a special vow to the *Khati* are bare-footed and wear over [292]
their garments long white shirts which they take off at the entrance to the enclosure of the sanctuary and throw into a pit especially dug for this purpose. A great number of animals is sacrificed to the *Khati*—hundreds of sheep, goats and oxen are killed. Baron de Baye relates that 750 sheep and two oxen were sacrificed at the celebration in the monastery of Alaverdi in Kakhatia, and that the celebration in the Khevsur sanctuary, *Khakhmatis-jvari,* required the sacrifice of from 500 to 600 sheep and twenty to forty oxen. The blood of the animals is caught in a special wooden vessel. The *dekanozi* who butchers the animals washes his hands in the blood and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the offerer. The pelt and fore part of the animal belong to the *dekanozi* and the hind part to the offerer, who forwards it to the attendants of the *Khati* to use as supply for the general feast which follows the religious ceremonies.

Besides saying prayers and killing the sacrificial animals during [693]
religious holidays, the *dekanozis*[1] also hear complaints of various [793]
kinds and settle disputes, according to established custom.

---

[41] Baye: a, 253.
[42] Zisserman: 23-4.

[1] [I.e., shrine attendants; see cat. 116, p21 ff., esp. p29--Analyst]

Chevsur

796 223 In general, all these religious celebrations are accompanied by national songs, dances, and among the Pshavs by the shooting of guns to test their marksmanship (*khabakhi*). The Khevsurs also have *khabakhi*, not during religious festivals, but during the ceremonies held in commemoration of the dead. These holidays principally afford an opportunity for excessive eating and drinking enormous quantities of the sacred beer, and usually end in a fight.

Dr. Radde[43] relates that during his visit to Khevsuria he found the whole congregation of a community, including the dignitaries of the sanctuary, after the holiday celebration, dead drunk and stretched out on the "sacred" grounds of the *Khati* in a deep sleep and snoring loudly.

693 793 The *Khevis-beri* and the *dekanozis,* in addition to their religious duties, also handle the judicial and administrative affairs of the country. Thus, for example, every year, beginning the 8th of October (if it does not fall on a fast day) until the 10th of November, the Pshav *khevis-beris* take the sacred standard (*drosha*) from one of the principal sanctuaries in Pshavia, the *Khati* of *Lashris-jvari,* and, accompanied by a group of horsemen, visit every village in the country, administering justice and fining the individuals found guilty of disobedience of the regulations of established custom.

721 793 The influence of the *khevis-beri*[4] of the sanctuary of *Lashris-jvari* in Pshavia was in times past so great upon all twelve communities forming the Pshav people,[44] that when they had decided to undertake, with the sacred *drosha* in their hands, a war against the neighboring Kists, and the rumor about this spread over the country, every man without exception made haste to the meeting place, which was in the defile of Maturi (*Maturis Khevi*). In two or three days everyone was present at the meeting place, well armed and carrying his own ration of provisions, enough to last for two weeks in expedition. "Woe to the man," writes R. D. Eristov,[45] "who will not present himself under the standard

---

[43] Radde: c, 259.
[44] Pshavia, 250-1.
[45] Eristov: a, 137-8.

[4] [i.e., religious personnel; see cat. 116, p. 29ff.--Analyst]

(*drosha*) of the *Khati* . . . . Then there is no life for him: he 724
must pay a great fine as punishment, he is despised by his fellow-members of the community, and the wrath of the *Khati* is upon him . . . ." 793

Summoned in such a way, the Pshav army attacked the Kists 727
and seized their herds and flocks, and returned home. The booty 721
was divided into three parts. One part was given to the *Khati* as a thank-offering for the success of the expedition. Another part was sent to the head of the administration, called *mouravi* in Georgian, the *pristav* of the Russian government; and the third part of the prize was divided among the participants in the expedition. For every captive a ransom of sixty rubles was demanded, which was given in full to the sanctuary of *Lashris-jvari*. The ransom for a head, if taken from the slain, was one ox and one sheep. Returning from their expedition, the Khevsurs carried as trophies, according to the existing custom, the right arms cut off from slain enemies. These arms were fastened usually upon the doors of the houses. They were seen and reported by investigators who visited Khevsuria. Thus Dr. G. Radde,[46] who was there in the summer of 1876, saw such trophies in the villages of Guro and Shatil nailed on the walls of the Khevsur towers. "Man sah an der nord-seite dieses Thurmes, im Dorfe Guro," writes Dr. Radde, "drei Lesginer-oder Kisten-Haende angenagelt. Das waren doch Trophaeen aus den fuenfziger Jahren. Bisweilen befinded sich an solchen Haenden noch ein Theil des Unterarms. . . ." And further[47] he relates that he found the hand-trophies also in the village of Shatil. "Die Hauser des Dorfes Schatil verden durch hohe starke Schiefermauern gebildet. Gleich unten sahen wir neuen Haende unter dem Carniese angenagelt."

The officials of the Russian government many times used the 793
influence of the *khevis-beri* and the standard (*drosha*) of *Lashris-* 642
jvari when it was necessary to call the people together.

The influence of the attendants of the sanctuaries upon the country and the power which they exercised upon the people is

---

[46] Radde: a. [Ii, e, 3 chapters; see cat. 116, p 40-41 -- Analyst]
[47] *Ibid.*

793 diminishing, although very slowly, liberating the people's social
642 life from religious control.

If the people were obedient before to all regulations and orders of the attendants of the sanctuaries, executing their orders readily and without any hesitation for fear of the supernatural power of the *Khati*, gradually they have begun to dare to disobey the oppression of religion and to seek the protection of government officials. This fact is clearly pictured in the information given by R. D. Eristov, who was himself for two years the head of the administration governing the district occupied by the Khevsurs, the Pshavs and the Tushes.

681 "Once there came to the head of the district administration,"
626 writes Eristov,[48] "a Pshav with a petition to unbind him. Such
793 a request surprised us and at the same time made us laugh, be-
642 cause the Pshav was not bound at all, but he soon explained to us the meaning of his petition, as follows: When the *dekanosis*[1] visiting the defile came to the village where the Pshav lives, he was not at home and naturally he could not meet them with the necessary and customary presents. Because of this the *dekanosis* hung a silver cup upon a tree and with this they 'bound' the man; that is, they put upon him the following prohibitions: that nobody be permitted to talk with him; that nobody be allowed to lend him anything; and finally they forbade him to take part in the religious and social gatherings until he paid the enormous fine imposed upon him. But as the poor Pshav was unable to pay even a fourth of the requested indemnity, he was petitioning to be unbound (set free) from the payment of the fine imposed upon him."

769 In the beginning of this chapter,[2] we mentioned the Georgian Highlanders' belief in the existence of spirits and life beyond the grave. Their belief in spirits and their cult of the dead represent the fundamental and principal part of their religion. The Georgian Highlanders believe that death does not signify the end of life, but on the contrary the deceased continues to live beyond the grave, and the manner of their life and the necessities of their existence are the same as those of people living on the earth.

---

[48] Eristov: 134.

[1] [a priest; see cat. 116, pp 40-41, 29 ff.--Analyst]

[2] [cat. 116, p. 19 ff --Analyst]

They can be hungry, thirsty, angry; they may be pleased or 769
provoked. At death a person does not cease to be a member of his family. Every family has to take care of its dead, see that they are not hungry or neglected. The living and dead members of a family reciprocally assist each other. The living carry food and comfort to the dead, and in return for these efforts the dead protect and assist their living kinsmen in their struggle for life as good spirits. But if forgotten, they become angry and avenge their neglect by sending evil and every kind of mischief upon the living members of their families; then they become the dreaded evil spirits. Thus the Georgians of Samurzakan[40] believe that "the souls of the dead, being displeased with someone of their living relatives, come to their herds and kill the animals, and when embittered they may even slay the proprietors. In order to avoid this, the living sacrifice goats and sheep and bring the choicest food to the graves of dead relatives who they have reason to think may be dissatisfied, imploring them not to come to them in dreams or in reality." This interrelation between the living and the dead in the matter of reciprocal help is not an artificially made theory, but represents one of the basic factors upon which rests the whole social life of the living people. This reciprocity is demonstrated in every phase of social life: in the customs connected with birth, marriage, funerals, blood-feuds, etc.

The result of these beliefs in regard to the souls of the dead was the development of the cult of dead ancestors, which in turn is responsible for the existence of the cult of the common ancestor, who, as generally believed, is the head and founder of the community, its protector and benefactor.

Every adherent to this cult[1] is regarded as kin, even if he is just 620
an adopted stranger, provided he has followed the procedure 769
established by custom, which consists of bringing a sacrifice to the communal *Khati*,[2] followed by a general feast representing the sacramental consumption of the sacrificed animal. Through this procedure the adopted is regarded as a devotee of the cult and a full-fledged member of the community.

---

[1] [i.e., of the dead; see cat. 11C, pp 42-43 --Analyst]

[40] Machavariani, D., and Bartolomei, I.A.: 82.

[2] [i.e., sanctuary; see cat. 11C, p 25 ff --Analyst]

775 These beliefs of the people in the existence of spirits and in life beyond the grave[A] explain the existence and meaning of many customs practiced by the Georgian Highlanders. Thus, for example, the Tushes believe that the soul of the deceased continues to live among his relatives,[80] that the soul needs food and drink, like every human being, and therefore during dinner and supper a portion of the food is put aside for the satisfaction of his hunger. The relatives must take good care of all the needs of the souls of their dead, because of his ability to bring good and evil to the relatives according to the veneration shown to him.

"The world beyond the grave is known by the Tushes under the name of *suleti,* meaning 'the place of souls,' from the Georgian word *suli,* meaning soul. At its entrance sit the stern judges who receive the deceased and with sharp scissors cut two or three hairs from their heads. The *suleti* consists of two parts: paradise and hell. Between them flows a stormy and fiery river of pitch. Over the river is a bridge made of one human hair. The righteous pass over the bridge in safety, but the sinners fall into the fire."

So long as the family exists, the dead can count upon it to support their needs, but if a family dies out its dead roam hungry and homeless for all eternity. This belief explains the dread which the Georgian Highlanders have of remaining without children, who will take care of their dead parents. Male children [842] are particularly desired, not only because they are regarded as defenders of family interests in blood-feuds and supporters of the tradition, but also because they represent security and comfort for their parents after death, in their life beyond the grave, which explains the existence of the custom of the husband divorcing a sterile wife and taking another—with the first wife's permission [597] if she has borne only female children. The same phenomenon accounts for the practice of the custom of the adoption of the son-in-law, known in the Georgian language as *zedsidze,* and, lacking a son-in-law, the adoption of a stranger—to have a posterity who will take care of dead parents.

769 The belief in spirits explains the custom of putting aside a portion of food at every feast or at ordinary meals for dead

---

[80] Khakhanov: a, 50-1.

[A] [see cat 116, pp 42-43 --Analyst]

members of the family. This custom existed not only among the Svans and Khevsurs in the secluded Alpine communities, but also among the cultured Lowlanders, who generally observed the habit of dipping a piece of bread in a glass of wine at the beginning of a meal, with these words: "*Ghmerto atskone mati suli,*" meaning in English: "Lord, bless Thy souls." I saw this custom observed everywhere in Georgia, and have often been present at meals when this prayer was said.

Besides the custom of supplying the dead with food, the attitude toward the deceased and the belief in life beyond the grave are clearly expressed in the custom of having a special holiday dedicated to the memory of the dead, which is called *sulta dghe*, meaning "the day of the souls," from the Georgian words *suli* (soul) and *dghe* (day).

Thus the Svans,[81] in admitting the bodily existence of the dead in the life beyond the grave, are convinced also of the urgent necessity of supplying them with food and drink, and therefore at their commemorative feasts they try to outdo their neighbors by preparing tables covered with meat, bread and brandy, with a view to please the dead. The Svans believe that the souls of the dead return to their earthly kinsmen periodically every year, usually for a whole week beginning with the day of manifestation of Our Lord (Epiphany). They try hard to be ready for this day; they clean and scrub their houses, tables, chairs, wash plates and dishes, and prepare exquisite food.

This Svan custom of entertaining the visiting dead may be described as follows:[82] On the eve of the day of the Baptism of Our Lord the Svans prepare themselves with great zeal for the reception and entertainment of the dead. On this day they clean and wash all vessels and furniture in the house, believing that the dead may get angry at something and curse the whole family. They fast the whole day and evening; they bake many kinds of bread, prepare the lent (*nocque*) food and put it on the long tables, filling the cups with brandy (*araki*), and light the cereous candles. The brandy and candles are placed at the end of the table. Then all members of the family except the eldest hide themselves in corners of the room, because at this time, according to their belief, the souls of dead members of their family arrive for supper. After a period of general silence, the eldest in the family approaches the table, takes a cup of brandy, and, kneeling, addresses the invisible guests in these words: *"Khochav lakun parkh sablu chis madil perikh nom Khimpavrald; mai latial patskh martskhs nakabunad. Chiv shvendba parkh."* This passage may be translated into English thus: "May all of you unfortunates have peace. We ask you not to be angry at us; protect us as much as possible from ill luck. May there be eternal memory for all of you!"

---

[81] Gulbiani: 89.

[82] Margiani: 84-6.

Afterward the old man asks the dead not to harm him and to grant to himself and his family long life, for the Svans believe that the soul of a dead person may bestow a blessing or ill fortune. While the old man is addressing his unseen guests, one of the members of the family plays on the *chunir* (a stringed musical instrument resembling the guitar). This scene lasts about twenty minutes, sometimes longer. Then the whole family sit down to supper, after which they do not go to bed but pass the night in vigilance. They tell stories in turn, play on the *chunir,* dance, etc. The fire is not extinguished but is kept burning the whole night through in order that the guests from the other world will not be cold. This entertainment of the dead continues from the evening of the day of the Baptism of Our Lord (starting Saturday evening) till the second Monday. This week is known to the Svans as *lipanal,* meaning "to prepare the table for the dead." During the whole of this time no one is permitted to work, not even to cut wood, which is consequently accumulated and stored beforehand.

Early Monday morning the tables are prepared with meat and bread, for the last meal of the dead. All members of the family hide themselves in corners of the room and the eldest approaches the table and says to the invisible guests: "May the Lord forgive you your sins and give you eternal peace . . ." etc. Then he breaks up all the bread into small pieces, cuts off a few morsels of meat and puts it all on a small round table. He fills the cups with brandy, lights the candles, prays to the souls, and carries the

table out into the yard. This indicates that the souls of the dead 769
are now leaving the house and saying good-bye to the family. After all this is over, the children gather together. They make a wooden cross, fix the lighted candles upon it, and visit one neighbor after another, singing the special chant for the event:

> *"Kriste Pusd, Khamvai ishgvid lungjas quin lapkhurna endji lakhkhurin al korash metsvlabrmi lakun, jamen!"*

Translated into English, this song is as follows:

> "Our Lord Jesus Christ, as Thou gave peace to the soul of the seven-weeks-old child, likewise give peace to the souls of the dead of this house. Amen!"

For this service the children receive presents, mostly food.

The belief in such material needs for the dead as food and drink is also clearly indicated in the custom of the Khevsurs and Svans of a person arranging his own funeral ceremonies and feast during his lifetime.

The Svans think[53] that all expenses for funerals and commemo- 764
rative services for the dead are for the benefit of deceased souls. 769
They believe that the amount of such expenses are in proportion to God's forgiveness of the sins of the dead, for which forgiveness the grown-up people stand in greater need than the children. Therefore, the funeral expenses for the latter are usually small. It also often happens that a childless old couple, having no hope that anyone will arrange elaborate funerals for them after their death, make such preparations during their own lifetime.

The Svans also believe that the soul of the deceased continues to live in the same house for a whole year after death and has the same material needs as a living person.[54] Therefore, during this year a portion of dinner and supper, a pipe with tobacco, and brandy (*araki*) are placed in a dark corner of the room for this soul. All this is consumed afterward by the children. In the life beyond the grave the soul asks God for a better life than it had upon earth. Therefore, the commemorative services for the dead

---

[53] Margiani: 81.
[54] Teptsov: 60.

769 are of great importance; they give pleasure to the souls here on earth. But if such services are not arranged, the soul becomes an enemy of the house and may send mischief. In order to prevent this, many people arrange their own commemorative services while still alive. The entire village, and sometimes even the whole community, is assembled for this occasion. The person about to die puts on his best clothes and eats and drinks as much as he can. The people cry and wail, recite his deeds, kiss his clothes, etc. . . . In a word, they do everything exactly as if it were a real funeral ceremony. The living-dead observes those who appear to be most devoted to him, with the thought that after his death his soul may bring happiness to all who love him. The ceremony ends with a general feast.

[764] The Khevsurs also have this custom of living people arranging their own funerals, differing from the Svans in that the Khevsur is not present at his own funeral celebration, but listens to the wailing and crying of his neighbors in an adjoining room.

775 The manner of the interpretation and representation of the soul of the dead by the Georgians in general is pictured in the custom of catching the soul of a drowned person from the river, as it is practiced by the Georgians of Samursaken,[88] and with local variations in details by their neighbors, the Abkhazians.

The soul of the drowned person remains, according to popular belief among the Georgians of Samurzakan, in the river for fifteen days and roams under the water in the vicinity of the place where the tragedy occurred. The relatives of the drowned person are anxious to find someone who is a professional expert at enticing souls out of the water and catching them. For this purpose the soul-catchers take a skin bag called *guda* to the open mouth of which is affixed a silver thread, and two men drag it upstream from the banks to the middle of the river, beginning about seven hundred feet above the spot where the corpse was found. The soul-catchers have in their hands musical instruments similar to violins, and to their monotonous accompaniment they sing: "Soul, soul! Come out of the water. Soul, soul! Fly into the skin." The soul must come out of the water and enter the skin through

---

[88] Machavariani and Bartolomei.

[Samurzakan]

the silver thread which is lowered into the water. The ceremony 775 lasts until the skin will no longer swell. That means the soul is caught in the skin. Then the skin's mouth is tied with the thread and brought to the relatives of the drowned man, who, after having redeemed the soul, on the same day release it through a hole made for that purpose into the grave in order that it may be re-united with the body. More than once the soul-catchers have 691 complained to the local justice because they did not receive the 775 payment promised them. If the accused refused to pay on the pretense that although the soul of their relative was caught but the whole of it was not delivered to them, while the soul-catchers proved that they had delivered the entire soul, in such circumstances the wise judge, in order to satisfy both sides, would solve the case according to popular custom by forcing both sides to take the oath as to the truthfulness of their words.

This custom is especially interesting to note because of its legal character. When the swollen and tied-up skin-bag, which is supposed to contain the soul of a drowned person, is delivered by the soul-catchers to the relatives of the deceased, the latter are obliged to pay the fee fixed beforehand for the work of catching the soul. If they refuse to pay, the offended party resorts to the law of custom, according to which the justice settles the dispute.

Parallel with this custom among the Georgians of Samurzakan 775 regarding the soul of a drowned person is a similar belief among the Georgians of the Telav District, Department of Tiflis.[84] They believe that "the souls of drowned persons are taken in possession by evil spirits, and in order to free the soul it is necessary to kill a goat on the bank of the river where he was drowned and throw the bleeding animal into the water with these words: 'Here is a goat for you; free the drowned man!'"

The funeral ceremonies which accompany the burial of a dead 764 person and the special commemorative celebrations which are arranged at certain periods thereafter consist of customary procedures which are followed and executed by the people with minute exactness and have the same aim: to feed and comfort the dead.

& [see cat. 116, p48--Analyst]

---

[84] Stepanov: 82.

764 The funeral customs are almost similar among all groups of Georgian Highlanders, as well as their kinsmen in the Lowlands. Only it must be noted that the Khevsurs have a special attitude toward the body of a deceased person, which they regard, as did the Hebrews of the Old Testament, as unclean. People are appointed to wash the body and bury it. They are called *narevebi.* When the dead person is a woman, the *narevebi* are girls; when it is a man, the young men perform the task. The *narevebi* are regarded as unclean for a certain period of time and are the subject of special taboos and regulations similar to those prescribed by the Mosaic laws.

All customs connected with the funeral ceremonies and the attitude of the people toward the dead person can be explained in the manner of interpretation and the beliefs which they hold about the life beyond the grave and the existence of spirits.[a] The funeral ceremonies, a description of which we are not undertaking at present, are numerous, complicated in detail, and require such large expenditures that the grief-stricken family is seldom able to pay all the necessary expenses without heavy material losses and even financial ruin without the support of their kinsmen, which support, however, is customarily given.

776 753 On the beliefs in the existence of spirits (good and evil) is founded also the conviction of the people that every possible calamity, misfortune, sickness and death originate with these evil spirits. They are regarded not only as the cause of sickness but as the personification of illness itself, and are called *batonebi,* meaning "lords," representing the plural form of the Georgian word *batoni* (lord). They are also called *angelozebi* (angels), which is also the plural form of the word *angelozi* (angel). In this case we have the terming of spirits with names taken from the Christian religion, a frequently occurring phenomenon in the Caucasus—the mixture of Christianity with the ideas of primitive religion.

These beliefs are present among all groups of the Georgian nation. Thus, for example, the Georgians of the Thelav District, Department of Tiflis,[57] believe that "all epidemic diseases have

---

[57] Stepanov: 99. [a] [see cat. 116, p 42 ff --Analyst]

their own angels, called *angelozebi* or *batonebi*, meaning lords. 776
Because of their presence the people fall ill with smallpox, typhoid 753
fever, scarlet fever, and other contagious diseases. When someone becomes ill it is not necessary to appeal to the physicians and their remedies, because by such action it is possible to offend and anger the angels of sickness. . . ." And as the only remedy in curing the sick person, the people must "please" the evil spirits with every kind of performance—dancing, singing, playing on the various musical instruments, decorating the sick person's room, etc.; and beseeching them to leave the sick person.

The information concerning the existence of similar beliefs and practices is reported from all parts of Georgia, as, for example, in the writings of T. Mamaladze,[58] A. Sagaradze,[59] Japaridze, and others.

In every kind of mischief the people try to find out the possible 791
cause, as they think, of the anger of the spirits by various means of divination. There are different ranks of diviners, known under their Georgian names as *mloṭsavi, mkitkhavi, mesultane,* and *kadagi*.

A *mlotsavi* is a person of either sex, who knows special prayers for every kind of illness and affliction. The name *mlotsavi* is derived from the Georgian word *lotsva,* meaning "a prayer." The people believe that the *mlotsavi* can heal by his prayers because he enjoys special favors in the eyes of the spirits and that his prayers will be answered and the sick man restored to health.

The prayers which are said by the *mlotsavi* are interesting for their figurative language as well as for the psychological phenomenon which they express. As examples we mention the prayers recorded by Japaridze,[60] and Mindeli[61] from the province of Ratcha; those recorded by Mamaladze[62] from the province of Guria; and those recorded by V. Bardavelidze-Lomia[63] from the province of Kartli.

---

[58] Mamaladze: 45-6.
[59] Sagaradze.
[60] Japaridze: 131-37.
[61] Mindeli: 138.
[62] Mamaladze: 110-12.
[63] Bardavelidze-Lomia: 104.

781 The *mkitkhavi* are diviners. A *mkitkhavi* can be a man or a woman, although they are more often women than men. The *mkitkhavi* tells of the future, using water, grain, or beans as media, or by winding and unwinding a piece of thread on a plank, and by many other manipulations.

The *mkitkhavi* may sometimes even be attendants at the Khevsur sanctuary (*dekanosi*).[44] In such case the relatives of a sick person who seek the help of the diviner (the *dekanosi*) are obliged to bring a sheep to him; he kills the animal and performs the rite called "the washing of hands and shoulders" (in the Georgian, *khel-mkhris dabana,* from the words *kheli*—hand; *mkhari*—shoulder; and the verb *dabana,* meaning "to wash"). The meaning of this custom is based on the belief that the blood of the slain animal will wash away the afflictions of the sick person.

It is necessary to note that not only a *dekanoz*—a servant of the distorted and heathen religion of the Khevsurs—but even the priests of the Greek Catholic Church did not shy at the business of divination.

182 The different manners of divination, like many other customs and practices—such as the bringing of special sacrifices to the *Khati,* funeral and commemorative ceremonies, curing of diseases, etc.—are founded on the belief of the people in the existence of spirits (both good and evil), and upon their cult of the dead.[1] And we believe that these religious observances account for the widespread customs of hospitality among the Georgians, which will be discussed in the ensuing chapter.[2]

---

[44] Eirstov: 101-2.

[1] [see cat. 116, p 42 ff --Analyst]

[2] [cat 116, p 53 ff --Analyst]

CHAPTER IV

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is one of the customs which is mentioned and praised 574 by everyone who has visited the Caucasus, since it has been found 609 to be practiced by all peoples of the country, regardless of their 171 language, religion or ethnic differences. In discussing these customs, however, no writer has ever made any discrimination in the practice of these customs among the various tribes.

However, we think that the customs of hospitality as practiced by the Georgians of the Highlands and Lowlands alike are different in some way from those of the other mountaineers of the Caucasus. If we review the customs of hospitality as practiced by the Georgians, and on the other hand, by the other mountaineers, we shall see at once the difference. With the Georgians, every stranger may be sure to find a genuine and hearty reception, in every corner of Georgia and among all its different groups. No questions are asked and no introduction is necessary. On the other hand, with the Circassians and the other mountaineers, in order to enjoy the privileges of their hospitality, a stranger must be introduced by someone, if not personally at least *in absentia*. A guest is known to them by the name of *kunak*, called *conaco* in the writings of the Italian missionary, Georgio Interiano, who describes the life and customs of the Circassians (16th century). Besides Interiano, the customs of hospitality are related by other travelers. They all stress the high esteem for the guest, which often reaches sanctity. The Englishman, Bell, in the beginning of his book (1840), mentions that it was necessary for him and his companions, when landing on the Circassian coast, to name the Circassian whose friends (*kunaks*) they were. Otherwise, he remarks, they could not count on the hospitality of the people, because every stranger who had no *kunaks* among the Circassians was at once seized, taken into slavery and kept a slave or sold to the Turks. People who have

574 visited the Circassians have stated that these people consider their
604 customs of hospitality as sacred, and that there were no examples
171 of the violation of this custom by the mistreatment or molestation
of a guest by his host.

In describing his prejudices against the Circassians, and the many good traits in their manner of life and customs, as he actually found them, Taitbout de Marigny[1] writes about the sacred sentiments of hospitality: "Combien je ne trompais, et qu'il est respectable et sacré le sentiment que les Tcherkesses attachent à l'hospitalité! On voit chez eux cette vertu mise en action, tandis que chez nous elle n'est que dans les écrits des philosophy." "The Kabardian," writes Klaproth,[2] "is a most scrupulous observer of the custom of hospitality and when he has taken any person under his protection, or received him as his guest, the latter may repose implicit confidence in him, and trust his life in his hands: never will he betray or deliver him up to his enemies." Similar information may be found in the reports and writings of everyone who has visited these people.

574 The sanctity of the person of a guest as that term is understood
604 among the Georgians. The Pshavs and Khevsurs, like many other mountain folk, place a high value upon hospitality.[3] They regard hospitality as something sacred.[4] "To them a guest is a sacred person," writes Prince Vakhoust, in describing the life and customs of the Georgians of Kartli; "they are hospitable and love strangers."

Numerous other writers have commented on the hospitality of the Georgians and other mountaineers of the Caucasus. The sanctity of this virtue is manifest in the everyday language, songs, and literature of the people. For example, the writer well remembers a song, popular among the college men of the Caucasus, which was sung in the Russian language and which said that the guest is sent by God. The first lines are as follows:

---

[1] Taitbout de Marigny: 263.
[2] Klaproth: 318.
[3] Eristov: 129; Gurko-Kriajin: 265.
[4] Zisserman: 213.

574
609

Nam kajdi gost darovan Bogom
Kakoi bi ni bil on sredi
Khotia bi v rubis'che ubogom,
Allaverdi, Allaverdi.

In English translation:

Every guest is given to us by God,
No matter from which country he may be—
Even if clothed in rags,
Allaverdi, Allaverdi.[5]

The phenomenon of regarding the person of a guest as sacred occurs not only in the Caucasus, but is found in different human groups in all parts of the world. A stranger is given a cordial and friendly reception by some people, while among others he is treated roughly, robbed, and in some instances put to death. "Side by side with gross indifference to or positive hatred of strangers, there is an institution which, it seems, prevails universally among the lower races while in their native state and which also prevailed among cultured peoples in the earlier stages of their civilization, namely, the custom of hospitality towards strangers."[6] These contrasting attitudes toward the stranger have their foundation in the beliefs concerning his personality. The stranger is regarded either as a benefactor or as a source of evil.[7] In the latter case the principal motive of hospitality is the "fear of the stranger."[8] And it is said by Ainus:[9] "Do not treat strangers slightingly, for you never know whom you are entertaining." "Every traveler found a cordial welcome among the Celto-Iberians, because they considered those who were in the company of strangers as beloved by the gods."[10]

Hospitality such as was found among the Georgians of the Caucasus was universal among the peoples of the East. "Hospi-

---

[5] Allaverdi, meaning "God (be) with you."
[6] Westermarck: c, 50.
[7] *Ibid.*, c, 55.
[8] Muhlmann: 463.
[9] Batchelor: 114.
[10] Gerig: 799.

000 tality among the Semitic and Eastern peoples in general rests upon religious sanctions. To be inhospitable was not only to be despicable, it was also to be irreligious. Hospitality was a sacred duty."[11]

574
609 The doors of every Georgian family are wide open to the stranger. He is cordially welcomed and entertained. If the family of the host is poor, the relatives and neighbors come to his assistance, supplying what is necessary for the entertainment of the guest.

---

[11] Gruickshank: 816.

CHAPTER V

FAMILY

The family among the Georgian Highlanders represents an exogamous social unit which is patrilineal in descent, and patrilocal. 591

The form and composition of the family is not the same among the different groups of Georgian Highlanders. Among the Khevsurs, who leave the parental home at once after marriage, the family consists usually of a married couple and their children. Among the Pshavs, who are not partisans of division, the married brothers and their aged parents often live together, forming large families, which may be regarded as a remnant of the joint-family which was present in the whole Georgian Kingdom in time past. The same phenomenon is to be found also among the Svans, where individual brothers live together, forming a large homestead.

The father is the head of the family. In times past, the father 593 was not only the head in the economic life of the family, but he was also its spiritual leader. The center of the home worship [372] was the house hearth. The hearth and the iron chain suspended over it, called *sakideli,* and fire in general, were believed to be endowed with special supernatural power. On these beliefs are founded customs regarding fire as a cleansing and purifying agent, and the walking around the hearth during the wedding ceremony of the Pshavs.[1] The wife and children are subordinate to the father, obeying all his orders. His power and his rights over his children are manifested especially in the marriage procedures, where parental approval was necessary; most of the business of choosing the bride, matchmaking and bethrothal are accomplished by the parents without asking the consent of the young people. The power of the father is greater among the Svans than among 593 the other groups of Georgian Highlanders. It is clearly expressed 847 in the custom of infanticide which was practiced formerly in

---

[1] See Chapter VI, on Marriage.

593 [847] Svanetia. In practicing this custom, the father had full right to kill his child or let it live, according to his own choice. Among the same Svans the father also had power in the matter of the inheritance rights of his son; he could delay and even deny his son his portion of the inheritance. However, his rights were not so absolute as those of the Roman *patria potestes*. Although the [562] wife is subordinate to the husband, at the same time she has the right to possess her own capital, called *sathavno*, which is not under her husband's jurisdiction. This trait of the patriarchal family represents a usual occurrence among the peoples of the Near East.[2]

As we have just mentioned, the wife is subordinate to her husband, the performance of the work of the whole household is in her hands, and in many places she plays a prominent part in the field work. However, her personal safety[3] is guaranteed by her capital (*sathavno*), and in case she is endangered by her husband or his kin, she is protected by her kinsmen.

593 602 The relations between the married couple are regulated by special customs. Among the Khevsurs, a husband, with the exception of the first three days, sleeps apart from his wife. The upper story of the house represents the living place of the husband; the rest of the family remain on the first floor. For the conjugal nightly visits the wife climbs the primitive stairway leading to the room of her husband. Among the other groups of the Georgian Highlanders, such separation of the spouses is not practiced. Another particularity of the Khevsur married couple is the custom of avoidance of each other in public. Husband and wife try not to be seen together in public, at which time they act coldly toward each other, concealing their real affection. This custom was in use also among the Lowlanders of Georgia not very long ago.[4] It was considered a great insult to ask a Georgian about his family. Professor Kovalevsky[5] and other investigators of the Caucasus

---

[2] Koschaker: 215.

[3] See "Position of Woman."

[4] Koch: II, 290.

[5] Kovalevsky: a, I, 20.

like to see in this custom the indication of the old animosity between 593 husband and wife, when the husband stole his wife from 602 among his enemies. Consequently, they see in this apparently cold relation between husband and wife the indication of the supposedly former custom of marriage by capture. Although acceptance of this theory may be is necessary to construct the theory of evolution in human marriage, however if we leave all theories on the side and turn to reality, we will see that any custom of avoidance as between husband and wife, or between the married people and parents-in-law—the avoidance of parents-in-law which is practiced by many peoples in different parts of the world—do not show the symptoms of past animosity, but may be of purely religio-magical character.

Reviewing the position of children in the family, and their relations 842 with their parents, we notice first the sexual discrimination [593] —the boys are favored before the girls. Among the Svans the girls were even killed,[6] and the birth of a boy was the cause of a jubilee for the family, although it is necessary to mention the artificial restriction of the number of children among the Khevsurs. It is regarded as a great shame to have children during the first [162] year of married life, and the number of children in the Khevsur family usually does not exceed three. Children are prepared for 868 their future occupation: the girls from an early age helping with the housework, and the boys being taught to shoot, use the sabre, fight, and how to talk, or make speeches. Among the Khevsurs, for example, the boys at an early age are taught how to use a sabre, fencing with specially made wooden swords. Dr. Radde[7] describes a fight between two Khevsur boys, who were fighting, according to the regulations of expert fencers. "Auf den Gebrauchen der Waffen Zurueckkommen," writes Dr. Radde, "muss ich vor allem anderen erwaehnen, dass schon von Jugend auf dem Chewsuren-Knaben das Handhaben des Schwertes und Schildes gelehrt wird. . . . In ritterlicher Weise lassen sich dabei die Knaben auf ein Knie nieder und schlagen ganz geschickt, mit der linken Hand den Schild als Schutz gebrauchend und die Schlaege des Gegners parirend, regelrechte Primen, Secunden, Terzen und

---

[6] See Chapter VI, on Marriage.

[7] Radde: c, 256-7.

868 Quarten. Dabei wechseln sie waehrend des Fechtens die Kniee je nachdem das rechte oder linke bequemeren Stuetzpunkt gewaehrt; ja, wird der Kampf erbitterter, so Knien sie wohl auf beiden, legen sich mit dem Oberkoerper vor und gerathen selbst beim Spiel in sichtliche Aufregung. Zumal ist diess der Fall, wenn es gelingt, die gefaehrliche Prime zu schlagen. Dann wird Schild und Schwert fortgeworfen und es beginnt Rauferei und Faustkampf."

592 [598] In times past the social unit among the Georgian Highlanders, as well as among the other groups of the Georgian nation, was the joint family, called *didi-ojakhi* (*didi*—big, *ojakhi*—family).

All members of the joint family lived together in one house consisting of one large living room, called *darbasi*, and small rooms used as store houses and for similar purposes. The size of the *darbasi* depended upon the size of the family. The room was enlarged with the growth of the family, but no new additions were made in the form of separate rooms. As among the Ossetes, each married couple of the joint family had one separate room, representing partitions of one big house called *khadzar*. However, among the Georgians, as we already stated, the whole family lived in one room (*darbasi*). To ascertain the possible size of the room we may mention that the members of the family often reached the number of one hundred. According to information given to N. L. Abasadze[8] by a native old woman, in the *darbasi* of a peasant by the name of Sebiskveridze, in the village of Nabaktevi, department of Gori, there were twenty-five cribs. This fact indicates the size of the family. The joint family consisted of as many as thirty, forty, or even a hundred people. For example, the joint family of a man by the name of Chedlishvili, in the village of Nikosi, situated in the department of Gori, there were not less than thirty adult male members.

The family life was conducted in one room. They slept, cooked, ate and passed their free time in discourse or other diversion openly before each other. Mr. N. L. Abasadze[9] relates that on his inquiry as to why they lived in one crowded room when it was possible to occupy the different adjoining rooms, the elders explained that by living in one room the life of every member of the family was open and seen by everyone, and that this system eliminated the possibility of laziness or the concealment of common property, and made it easier to prevent quarrels and gossip of the members of the families.

---

[8] Abasadze: 15.
[9] *Ibid.*

The joint family (*didi-ojakhi*) was governed by two officially appointed persons: the head man and the head woman. Both of these offices were attained by general election, in which all the adult members of the family took part, without any sexual discrimination, that is, the women had full and equal rights of voting. Both the head man and the head woman could be relieved of their duties if they were inefficient or of advanced age, in which case new elections were arranged.

The head man was called, among the Pshavs, *mama-katsi,* from the Georgian words *mama,* meaning father, and *katsi,* meaning man. The head man of the Georgian Lowlanders was not called the *mama katsi* as among the Pshavs, but *uprosi-katsi,* meaning in English, the oldest man, from the Georgian words *uprosi*—elder, and *katsi*—man. Although the head man of the family (*mama-katsi*) was usually the oldest man, it should be mentioned that mere age was not the criterion necessary to attain the office; but wisdom, experience of life, and high moral and personal qualities were required. In case the oldest man of the family did not have the required abilities, any suitable younger male member of the family had full right to be elected as the head man. The head man supervised and directed all the affairs of the family. He was the leader and supervisor of the male members in distributing work among them which was necessary to be done. On the other hand, the supervising of the female members of the family was in the hands of the head woman or matron of the family, who was called, by the Pshavs, *dia-sakhlisi*—meaning in English, "the mother of the house," from the Georgian words *dia* or *deda*—meaning "mother," and the word *sakhli*—meaning "house." She distributed work among the women folk, supervising and overseeing that everything was done correctly.

572 Every member of the family was obliged to obey the words of the head man and head woman, respectively. Every disobedience was punished. Although the head man, who was higher in power than the head woman, and the matron exercised almost absolute power over the members of the family, it should be noted that their rights of executive power did not have a tyrannical character. Every member of the family had full right and choice to defend himself and express his own opinion about things to be done, which were done not merely by order, and executed blindly, but were brought into discussion before the whole family at a time when all were present, usually in the evening at supper time.

All property belonging to the family was owned jointly, although there was a difference in property rights between male and female members of the family.[10]

All quarrels and misunderstandings in the family were brought to the head man for solution and judgment. The head woman reconciled the quarrels among the women folk. If she was not successful, the case was brought to the head man.

It may be noted that every member of the family obeyed orders, and there was a marked group solidarity in the behavior of each member.

The joint family disintegrated with the adoption of the custom of the separation of married brothers. This is a usual occurrence, especially among the Khevsurs, where every brother leaves his parental home after marriage and starts a home of his own.

---

[10] See "Property."

CHAPTER VI

MARRIAGE

Reviewing the marriage ceremonies observed by the Georgian 581 Highlanders, we notice three distinct main parts in the procedure: the match-making, the betrothal, and the wedding.

The marriage is not a private but a communal affair: it represents a contract. The contracting parties are not separate individuals but social groups of families, or even whole communities. All relatives of the young pair take an active interest in the business. The family of the bride is interested not only in receiving the bride-price from the bridegroom, but also in the personality of the groom and the possible advantages of the union for the entire group. On the other side, the relatives of the bridegroom are busy supplying him with the necessary resources in order to meet the expenses of the celebration attendant upon all marriage ceremonies, so that in this case also we have the clearly marked group solidarity manifested in the assistance given the individual by the group as a whole. This last-mentioned trait of communal support of the bridegroom by his kinsmen is characteristic of all groups of Georgian Highlanders.

Although a certain amount of the bride-price must be paid by 583 the man in acquiring his wife in the communities of the Georgian Highlanders, nevertheless we cannot say that they follow the practice of marriage by purchase as is done by other mountaineers of the Caucasus. The price paid by the Georgian for his bride is a minimum amount and is far outweighed by the special gifts presented to the bride by her relatives and friends, and by the dowry of the bride which represents her personal capital (called *sathavno*) and which she brings with her to the home of her future husband.

Contrary to the custom of the Georgians, the bride-price among 583 the other mountaineers of the Caucasus has a strictly established 171 value, paid in money or its equivalent in nature, and representing marriage by purchase. For the sake of comparison, let us consider

583 171 the valuation and nature of payment of the bride-price as practiced by some of these peoples.[1] In examining the data we see that among the peoples with developed and stratified social organization the bride-price also varies, usually according to the social standing of the bride and according to such personal qualities as beauty, age, and whether she is a widow or single woman.

The amount of *kalim* paid for the bride was evaluated lately in Russian rubles: The Circassians adopted this medium of evaluation after the Russian conquest of the Caucasus, as may be seen from the fact that payment was made in rubles. However, prior to the time of Russian domination, there was no monetary system and all transactions, including the payment of the bride-price, were made in nature. The standard of value varied among the different peoples of the Caucasus. It represented the most valued objects of the country in question, but payment was usually made with common objects.[2] Thus, among the Circassians the payment to be made was valued in arms and was paid out *de facto* with slaves.
583 Here, for example, is the table of *kalim* paid for a Circassian prin-
567 cess valued in arms and paid for with women slaves, in number
171 from six to fifteen:

(1) The best coat of mail valued at two women slaves.

(2) Another coat of mail valued at one woman slave.

(3) Arm mails—one woman slave.

(4) Arm mails and helmet—one woman slave.

(5) Sword—one woman slave.

(6) Sword (ordinary, simpler than the previous one)—one woman slave.

(7) Five horses—five women slaves. The value of each horse was equivalent to a woman slave.

Thus the *kalim* for a Circassian princess consisted of from six to fifteen women slaves, and sometimes even more. For the daughter of a nobleman (*uzden*), the *kalim* was from 800 to 1,200
583 rubles, and for a peasant girl from 200 to 600 rubles. With the
171 passage of time and changes in living conditions, the amount of
the bride-price (*kalim*) was changed, so that at the end of the

---

[1] Malinin: 21-61.

[2] See details in the section dealing with "weregild."

nineteenth century the *kalim* paid for a princess amounted to 500 583
rubles, and for widows, 300 rubles; for the daughter of a first- 171
grade nobleman (*uzdens* of the first rank), 350 rubles; and for
widows, 200 rubles.

Among the Circassian tribes of Shapsugs and Natukhais the *kalim* paid for a princess consisted of from 50 to 60 *skha;* and for a common girl, 25 *skha*. The standard value of a *skha* was approximately 60 to 80 oxen. Among those Circassian groups which had no gradations in the social scale, *kalim* could be paid with slave boys and girls; thus a princess cost from three to eight boys or girls, and a girl of common origin, one or two. In case slave children were not available, the *kalim* could be paid with a certain number of cattle or other domestic animals.

Among the Kabardians after the Russian conquest, the bride-price for a princess was 1,500 rubles; for the princess of a not-powerful family, 700 to 1,000 rubles; for the daughter of an *uzden,* 400 to 1,000 rubles; for a common girl, not more than 300 rubles.

Among the Chechens of Daghestan the bride-price is called *urdali*. The highest amount paid for a bride was 250 rubles, but in the time of Shamol, according to his orders, the bride-price was reduced until it reached the low figure of two cows.

Among the Ossets the bride-price is called *irad,* and was once very high, reaching even 1,000 rubles or 100 oxen in amount, but since the Russian conquest of the Caucasus it has declined in value, amounting in some Ossetic communities to the sum of 440 rubles. In 1866 a special meeting was held of the three communities of northern Ossetia, where the normal amount of the bride-price (*irad*) was fixed at 200 rubles. Formerly, in cases where the groom had no means to pay for his bride, he could pay with his labor. He was obliged to work for the family of his future wife for eight years.

The bride-price is paid by the Pshavs generally with cows: from 584
three to five cows for a single girl and not more than three cows [583]
for a widow. A Pshav girl normally marries at the age of 17 to
20 years. In the old times the choice of a husband was made
by her parents and she was obliged to marry the man of their

584 choice, whom she saw for the first time at the wedding ceremony. Later, however, her personal preference and consent were taken into consideration, although the will of the parents has always been the deciding factor. All necessary arrangements for acquiring a bride are made, not by the groom and his parents, but through a specially chosen match-maker, called *machankali,* who is well known to the family as an honest and respectable person. The negotiations of the *machankali* with the parents of the bride are not for a brief period, but on the contrary last for a long time. The interval between the first negotiations by the *machankali* and wedding-day is occupied with special arrangements, known as: (1) the encouragement; (2) the promise; and (3) the betrothal. The encouragement, called *daimedeba* from the Georgian word *imedi* (hope), is the information given to the bridegroom in an indirect way, that although the parents of the bride have not given their consent, they may accept his proposition of marriage. The promise, called in Georgian *agreoba,* is obtained by the *machankali* on his second visit to the house of the bride. And the final act of the matchmaking is the ceremony of the betrothal, called *nishnis datchra,* or simply *nishani.*

The first procedure of the matchmaking, the encouragement (*daimedeba*), is not obligatory and can easily be broken; but the Pshavs consider it obligatory to fulfill the promise (*agreoba*) and the betrothal (*nishnis datchra*).

In case of consent to the marriage by the bride's relatives, the acceptance of the proposal is registered by the characteristic hand-striking, the exchange of kisses, and the payment by the match-maker (*machankali*) of the special sum of money—one ruble and twenty kopeks in silver—as a token of betrothal, the *nishnis datchra* or *nishani.*

The betrothal (*nishnis datchra*) has among the Pshavs the character of a juridical transaction, and the failure by the father of the bride to fulfill his accepted obligations is regarded as a breach of contract and the bridegroom has the right to demand from him the indemnity for such dishonor, called *saupatio jarima* from the words *pativi* (honor) and *jarima* (indemnity). The indemnity (*saupatio jarima*) consists of fifteen cows. But in case

the girl is later given to the groom after the refusal, the indemnity 584
required is only half the original—eight cows.

In a breach of promise case the bridegroom has two ways of acting, either to kidnap the girl or to appeal to the popular justice at the national shrine, *Khati* of *Lashris jvari.* The attendants of the sanctuary, the *khevis-beri,* and the elders of the community act as judges. If the bridegroom is able to prove with the testimony of witnesses that he received a promise from the parents of the girl and the accomplishment of the betrothal, then the bride is awarded to him and the girl has no right to oppose the decision of the tribunal. It is necessary to mention that the bride is not present at the proceedings of the court, and everything is done in her absence and without asking her consent about the matter.

If the girl is abducted after her betrothal by another man, the ravisher has to pay the fine of fifteen cows and the girl's parents are freed from the obligatory payment. And the girl is punished by her parents through their officially excluding her from the native community, usually for a term of two years, although the time can be made shorter. This custom is known under the name of *moikvethavs.* The exclusion from the community is regarded as heavy punishment, having not only an economic but principally a moral and religious foundation, leaving the individual without any support or protection. This is not difficult to understand if we take into consideration the structure of the social organization, the importance of religion in the communal life and the position of the individual in society.

The first step of the reconciliation is for the abductor of the girl to send an envoy to the parents of the girl with a special present consisting of an ox and a sheep, called *khar-tskhvari* from the Georgian words *khari* (ox) and *tskvari,* meaning a sheep. Besides the *khar-tskhvari,* he has to pay also the *saupatio jarima* mentioned above.

The kidnaping of a woman is regarded by the Pshavs, and 583
generally by all groups of the Georgian Highlanders, as a disgrace, 628
not only to the woman's family, but to the whole of her community,
and therefore, immediately after the abduction, the young people
of the village take their pursuit, well armed and ready to fight.

583 Frequently there are bloody encounters if the pursuers succeed
628 in overtaking the fugitives. The pursuit is continued till the precincts of the village of the ravishers are reached. After this the kinsmen of the woman enter into negotiations with the kidnaper and usually the affair ends with the payment of indemnity and obligations as decreed by custom. Favorable results in negotiations are easily reached if the abduction has been made with the consent of the woman; in the contrary, the procedure is complicated and continues for a long time, with bloody encounters. And in the kidnaping of a married woman the consequence is the blood feud in which take part, not only the family of the woman but all the community, and the only satisfaction in this case is the death of the culprit and the return of the woman. As an illustration, we may cite a passage from the work of I. A. Bartolomei,[3] who during a journey in Svanetia was cordially entertained by the nobleman, Dadash Japaridze, who was not himself taking part in the general good time and conversation. "He related to me the cause of his grief," writes Bartolomei; "his house was deeply offended, requiring bloodshed and vengeance. Not long ago the young wife of his son was kidnaped by a nobleman from Lechkhum. Until she is returned, the family of Japaridze will be covered with a shameful stain which cannot be washed away even with blood. 'If the whole of this mountain,' said the old man to me, pointing out the mountain Elbrus at the foot of which we were staying, 'were transformed into gold and given to me in exchange for my dishonor—even then I would not be satisfied. God sees we are real Christians, but we cannot bear the insult to our family and until they return to me my daughter I will revenge till the last breath of my life.'"

584 In order to avoid the grave consequences of the abduction of a
589 bride, the Pshavs have as a remedy the custom of announcing in public gatherings the betrothal of certain couples. This custom is called the *kvethilshi chasma.* If a girl announces publicly as the betrothed of a certain man that she does not like him, she has the right not to marry him, according to the custom prevailing for

---

[3] Bartolomei: 99.

such an occasion. She may use this custom for her advantage 584 and be freed from compulsory marriage, on the condition that she 579 publicly takes a vow to remain single forever. The vow consists of the following words, in English translation: "I swear by the names of all saints, by the *Lashris jvari,* and by the name of *Thamar Pirmze* that I am determined to stay single forever!" After this she is called by the people a *motsmindari;* she has no right to marry, and is obliged to stay single. Some girls (*motsmindaris*) have even discarded the feminine dress and habit of life. They have dressed themselves in men's clothes, carried arms as every man does in Pshavia, and have even taken part in drinking parties and war expeditions. The last representative of such *motsmindari,*[4] died in 1885 in the village of Khushkheti. Her name was Tsukia.

Some time later, after the betrothal, the Pshav bridegroom sends 585 to the parents of his bride five *chapi*[5] of wine and one sheep; this is called *sakhlis sanakhavath* meaning the house visitation. After this the relatives of the bridegroom, together with their friends and neighbors, say beforehand special prayers for the occasion, and go to see the bride. They take with them six *chapi* of wine, bread, brandy (*araki*), and two sheep. This visitation is called *mosakithkhi,* meaning to inquire after, it is also called *rigtsesi,* meaning order. Besides this provision, all of the visitors carry some present for the bride, so the women give woolen and silken stuff, rings, ear-rings, etc., and the men present money, not less than one ruble in silver each.

The relatives of the bride add their own food to the victuals brought by the guests and entertain them with liberal hospitality. The next day, the father of the bride invites his friends and the *khevis-beri,* who kills the sheep sent by the bridegroom, lights the candles, and prays God's blessing upon the marrying couple. After the prayer the bride is led out from the house and seated on a chair in the middle of the yard, surrounded by all the guests. Then, from the assembled guests there is chosen a man known for the quick smartness of his tongue and mind as the official talker

---

[4] Khizanashvili: 132.

[5] *Chapi*—a measure containing 20 bottles.

585 and is called *mkepari*, meaning the barker, from the Georgian word *kepa* (to bark). The *mkepari* receives the gifts from the guests and presents them to the bride with witty remarks and jokes, thanking the donor. As recompense for his work, the *mkepari* receives either a small sum of money, usually twenty kopecks, or a pair of woolen socks. It should be mentioned that the bride presents everyone of the donors with a pair of socks of her own handiwork as a token of appreciation and the mark of her assiduity and industry. All these presents, which are made and received in public, help to enlarge the personal property of the bride, called *sathavno*. The bridegroom is absent on this occasion, because he has no right to visit the house of his bride before the wedding.

R. D. Eristov,[6] in describing the above-mentioned custom, omits the details of the procedure and gives a much simpler and abridged description: "One week after the custom called *sakhlis sanakhavath*," writes Eristov, "the bridegroom sends one of his relatives with a quantity of wine and two sheep to the parents of the bride. This visit is called by them *mosakithkhi* (visit) or *rigtsesi* (order). The envoy stays overnight with them and the next day he goes with the bride and her relatives to the church, where the groom is waiting for the wedding ceremonies."

The day before the wedding the bread is baked; an ox or cow, along with half a dozen sheep, is killed; and about forty *chapi*[7] of wine are stored for the thirsty throats during the wedding feast. On the same day the *makari*—the groom's best men—arrive. They bring food and drink sent by the groom.

With the arrival of the *makari*, the parents of the bride arrange the feast, which is called "the bride's wedding feast." After the feast the bride is dressed in her wedding attire, which consists of a red silken gown, a silken short fur coat called *katiba*, and over everything she is covered with a veil (*chadra*).

Accompanied by her attendants and the *makari*, the bride rides to the church, where the groom is waiting for her with his friends, his best man, called *ejibi*, and the *mejvare* (the cross bearer).

---

[6] Eristov: 112.

[7] Forty *chapis* = 40 x 20 = 800 bottles.

It is necessary to note that the groom is absent from all the 585 above-mentioned proceedings and meets the bride for the first time at the church.

The wedding ceremony is regarded by the Pshavs as a sacred affair, and is performed usually on Sundays, although it may take place also on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The ceremony is performed by a priest, and although the *khevis-beri*[A] does not take part in the exercises, his presence is regarded as indispensable, and his absence is viewed as displeasing to God and an unhappy omen for the marrying couple.

After the wedding the groom and all his attendants ride horseback and the bride walks behind them, wrapped in *chadra* and knitting the socks. After leaving the church the bride and groom and all their followers visit for a short time the home of the bride, where they are entertained with food, and afterward they go to the house of the groom.

When the wedding procession, called *nepioni*, reaches the house of the groom, it is greeted at the entrance of the house by the parents of the groom, the head steward of the wedding celebration, and the *mdadi*. The *mdadi* is chosen usually from among the middle-aged female relatives of the groom. She must not be a widow and must have healthy children. She represents the symbol of the future prolific life of the married couple. The *mdadi* wears a high silk hat and offers to the newlyweds two cups, one with honey and the other with milk-ferment. At first the *mdadi* gives to the bride the cup with the ferment and she must take some of it and smear the arch of the door. This is done, as the people believe, to bring joy and happiness into the house. As expressed in Georgian: *"Puridi de dzalian-barakiani kheli moikolos ojakhshi."* Afterward the *mdadi* offers to the bride and groom the cup containing honey and says to them: "May your life be as sweet as honey." It should be noted concerning this Pshav custom of treating the bride with honey at the entrance of the house, as a symbol of the future sweet life, that it is in universal use among all groups of the Georgian nation, among the rough Highlanders as well as among the cultured Lowlanders, with one difference, that instead of honey, sugar is sometimes used. Thus

[A] [an adultate; see cat, 116, p29 ff--Analyst]

515 among the Georgians of Ratcha,[8] neighbors of the Svans, when the bride and groom approach the house after the wedding ceremony the mother of the bride meets them at the door and gives sugar to each of them simultaneously, and holding her hands crossed she says to them: '*Ase tkbilat daberdit,*' meaning 'May you grow old sweetly.'

The Georgians of Guria observe the same custom, with the local variation that instead of the bride's mother, the mother of the groom or a near relative performs the ceremony. After the wedding ceremony,[9] the groom leads the bride directly into the house. The married couple is met on the threshold by the mother of the groom or someone of his near women-relatives. She puts in the mouth of the bride as well as the groom a piece of sugar, with the words: 'May your life be as sweet as sugar.'

Among the Georgians of the Telav district, department of Tiflis,[10] the above custom shows the following local peculiarity: When, after the wedding, the newlyweds are led into the house, someone from among the relatives greets them at the entrance and puts into the bride's mouth a piece of sugar, which she must take out at once and hide in her pocket. Later, after the wedding, when she is ready to be familiarized with the household and starts to prepare the dinner for the first time in her new home, she must throw the preserved piece of sugar into the food, and after this "everything she cooks in the house will be sweet and pleasant to everyone."

After the Pshav ceremony of offering honey and milk-ferment to the newlyweds, the *mdadi* takes off her skin hat and leads the bride and groom into the house, where they are met by the cross-bearer, called *mejvare,* from the Georgian word *jvari,* meaning cross. The *mejvare* carries in his hands a tray called *khoncha,* upon which he has bread (*khmiadi*), with a wooden cross placed upon it, from which he has the name of cross-bearer. On the three ends of the cross are fixed apples. Besides the bread, the *mejvare* also has a cup of honey on the tray.

---

[8] Japaridze: 130.
[9] Kereselidze: 232.
[10] Stepanov: 97.

The *ejib* takes the hand of the bridegroom and the *mdadi* that 585
of the bride, and they all walk slowly three times around the hearth (*satsetskhluli*) and the iron chain hanging upon the fireplace, called *sakideli*. The hearth is situated, usually, in the middle of the main living room of the house. The brother of the bride follows the procession and frequently strikes the iron chain with his dagger (*sakideli*) upon which the cooking pot hangs. This is done to keep the evil spirits away, as the Pshavs believe. Here we have the belief in the magical protective power of the dagger against evil spirits.

After the ceremonial walking around the hearth, the bride and groom, called "king and queen"—*mepe da dedopali*—are seated on a high sofa, called *takhta*, covered with a rug. To the right of the bride and groom is the *mejvare* (cross-bearer), and to the left the *ejibi*, then the *mdadi*, the attendants and the guests.

When the bride is seated, the ejibi puts on her lap a healthy male child and tells her: "May the Lord make you happy and give to you a son."

After this the wedding feast begins with songs, music and speeches. The wine is consumed in great quantities, but there is no drinking for the sake of drinking. The Georgian loves wine, which is abundant in his country, not merely as a drink but principally as a means of having a good time. After every feast there are speeches, songs with music, and at intervals, dancing and joking. After the wine is served to everyone, the *khevis-beri* takes the big drinking horn (*kantsi*) full of wine and announces the toast for the newlyweds, and everyone drinks to their health, shouting: *"Gaumarjos!"* meaning "May they be successful!" and *"Sheaberos!"* ("May they live long!"). The wedding feast continues sometimes for two and even three days.

The cross-bearer (*mejvare*) is obliged to be near the newlyweds, and for two days after the wedding he accompanies the bride and groom everywhere, walking before them with the cross in his hands. The *mdadi* is always with the bride during the wedding feast and the *ejibi* with the bridegroom.

The Pshavs believe that the life and every enterprise of human 585 776
beings are endangered by attempts of the evil spirits to attack 789

585 and harm them. And especially the evil spirits try with all their
776 power to make the bride and groom unhappy—*danavsos,* as they
789 say. To avoid this danger and to keep the evil spirits away, the attendants and friends of the bride and groom fire their guns during the time of leaving the church after the wedding, and on the way to the groom's house, and particularly before entering the house. As protection against the same danger, it is customary for the married couple to pass under crossed sabres when leaving the door of the church. This custom is observed throughout Georgia. The bridegroom, the *ejibi,* the cross-bearer (*mejvare*), the attendants and the brother of the bride are obliged to be armed with daggers. The *mdadi* sits with a dagger in her hand. This weapon is regarded by the Pshavs[11] as a sacred object (samkhto sagania), and they believe that the evil spirits are frightened by the dagger and will avoid it.

585 The marriage customs among the other groups of Georgian Highlanders, compared with those of the Pshavs as described above, show local variations and differences in detail. Thus among the Khevsurs, neighbors of the Pshavs, all arrangements previous to the wedding are usually made by the parents of the young people during their childhood and even when they are babies in their cribs. As a token of betrothal, the father of the groom gives to the parents of the bride an *abaz.*[12] But in spite of the early betrothal the wedding takes place only when the girl is of advanced age, not younger than twenty years old. At this time the groom sends to her a woman and two reliable men with three or four sheep, or in some communities the bridegroom sends two men with two sheep; one of the sheep is killed in the *Khati* and the other at the house of the bride. The envoys of the groom approach the house of the bride secretly and break in suddenly. The relatives of the bride, knowing well the meaning of the intrusion, must, according to custom, argue for a time with the newcomers and decline all their propositions, saying that they are not worthy of such honors. The intruders quiet them by praising the imaginary merits of the groom, and after some discussion they

---

[11] Khizanashvili: 135.

[12] *Abaz*—money, equivalent to twenty Russian kopecks.

begin to kill the sheep brought by them for the occasion. The opposition of the bride's parents to this act is broken, and they give their consent to the marriage and invite their relatives to the feast.

After the feast the bride is sent to the groom. The mother of the bride makes two pieces of wedding cake, called *kada*, one of which is eaten by the bride and her followers before living in the native village, and the other on the way to the village of the groom. The parents of the bride stay at home, but she is accompanied by her distant relatives and the envoys of the groom. In other instances,[13] the bride is accompanied by her kinsmen, one man from every house in the community. The whole village of the groom comes out to meet the bride and the greater is the honor shown toward her, the farther from the village is the place of her reception.

In both instances, in the giving of the bride by her people as well as her acceptance by the kinsmen of the groom, group solidarity and sustenance of mutual interests are clearly expressed. The whole community of the bride bids her good-bye at her departure, and on the other side all kindred of the groom welcome her and lead her into the village. The bride is accompanied by her relatives, who are present at all ceremonies of marriage and represent the security of her person and the interests of the bride. Upon her marriage a woman does not lose connection with her kindred, but on the contrary in case of any injury or offense which she may receive in the house of her husband she has full right and an open way to resort to the protection of her relatives. This fact explains the meaning of the penalty of exclusion from the community for a certain time of a girl who has eloped with another man, a custom among the Pshavs.

At the arrival of the bride the groom is hiding himself and is fetched from his retreat by specially-sent people, who lead him into the room of the celebration. Upon his entrance everyone rises. The bride and groom are seated together in the middle of the room before the house-hearth, with such calculation that

---

[13] Eristov: 110.

585 the smoke of the fire can blow in their faces, and the attendant of the *Khati*,[a] the *dekanoz*, performs the wedding ceremony. He places before the couple the food and beer, and gives them waxen candles, one to each. The bride and groom rise from their seats and the *dekanoz* sews their garments together with a needle. The attendants of the young pair pass a cup of brandy to the *dekanoz*, who prays for the Lord's blessing upon the couple. After the prayer the *dekanoz* congratulates the young married couple and drinks to their health, as do all the others present on the occasion. The wedding ceremony over, the wedding feast begins with drinking, singing and dancing. The bride and groom do not take part in the singing and dancing.

After the wedding the kinfolk of the bride return home, while she remains in the house of the groom for one or two weeks, after which time she goes back, accompanied by the groom's relatives, to her parents, where she remains two or three months, or even a whole year. During this time the groom has no right to see her nor to visit the village where she lives. Only upon her return at the end of the time prescribed by custom into the house of her husband does the normal conjugal life begin.

The relations between the newlyweds are reserved. They avoid being seen together or even talking with each other in the presence of others, and a woman is forbidden to call her husband and his relatives by their proper names.

The first three days after the wedding, the couple sleep together, uncovered. With the exception of these three days, the Khevsurs as well as the Pshavs sleep separately from their wives and visit them secretly at night. Only after the birth of the first child do normal unrestricted relations begin.

842
162 The Khevsurs regard it as shameful if the woman becomes pregnant during the first three years of her married life. They avoid having large families. The number of children in a family usually does not exceed three. The reason for this artificial restriction of children lies in the hard economic conditions of the country and the struggle of the people for existence in the rocky, secluded Alpine regions of the Caucasus.

[a] [see cat. 116, p. 255 ff.--Analyst]

Concerning the Tushes, neighbors of the Khevsurs, their 585 marriage ceremonies as well as their other customs are almost 583 identical. Characteristic are the views of Professor A. Kharkhanov concerning the customs dealing with marriage among the Tushes.

"Tushes, like the other mountaineers," writes Professor Khakhanov,[14] "not so long ago had the custom of stealing their brides. The administration is gradually forcing out this kind of marriage, but it has not yet succeeded in abolishing it. The signs of this tradition may be traced even in the marriage proceedings conducted by the clergy of the Georgian Orthodox Church. Thus, for example, when the groom goes to take his bride into the church, she is hidden in a remote room of the house and in order to see her the groom must bribe one of the bride's female relatives. The second indication of the ancient custom we see in the following: during the return of the young couple from the church after the wedding to the house of the groom, they are not permitted to enter until the bride's attendants extinguish with gunfire the burning torches in the yard. The peaceful followers of the bride represent the intimidation of the pursuers of the rapacious ravisher of the young Tush woman and the custom of shooting on the torches indicates the former bloody firings between the abductor of the bride and her relatives. When the aim (the extinguishing of the *fakels*) is attained, the guests are invited to supper. They give presents of money to the bride, and woolen socks to the groom. On the second day the veil which hides the face of the bride from the curious eyes of the Tushes is taken away, and on the third day (after the wedding) she returns to the house of her father, where she stays sometimes weeks, months, or even years, and only after the expiration of a certain time does the husband take her into his home."

Describing the marriage ceremonies among the Tushes, 523 Professor Khakhanov interprets the established customs in such 788 a manner, which in our opinion is in error. Thus the custom of extinguishing the burning fakels with gunshots by the bride's

---

[14] Khakhanov: a, 48-9.

583 789 followers does not represent at all the survival of the supposed former bloody encounters between the ravisher and his party and the bride's kinsmen, which the author thinks took place when the "custom" of marriage was by capture; but it may have a purely religio-magical explanation, like the customary firings of guns used by the Georgians at the time of childbirth, upon the married couple's departure from the church and after the wedding, and on the dawn of the first day of a new year; while the same explanation applies to the custom of firing guns during an eclipse of the sun.

847 If the economic conditions and the rigorous struggle for existence, as mentioned above, compel the Khevsurs,[a] to limit artificially the number of their children, the same conditions compel the Svans to take more drastic steps than the practice of abortion in controlling the birth rate, to practice the infanticide.

583 Among the Svans, as among the Khevsurs, the young people are engaged to marry in their early childhood, and there are even cases when the engagement takes place before the birth of the couple, when two friendly families decide to intermarry their children before they are born, in order to strengthen their amicable relations. All the necessary arrangements for the marriage are made by the parents of the young people, whose personal feelings are totally ignored.

The first step in the marriage is the match-making, when the parents of the bride receive from the parents of the groom one ruble or a bullet as a token of agreement. Later the betrothal is performed, consisting of the payment of two sheep or an ox or a cow, and is called *nakdanur*. After the *nakdanur* is given, before the wedding, the groom is obliged to pay for his future wife the special bride-price, called *nachvlash*. The *nachvlash* is paid by the groom himself or by his parents. His kinsmen do not assist him, as is the case among the other groups of Georgian Highlanders. The *nachvlash* consists, among the common people, of from 100 to 200 rubles, and among the upper class—the nobility, called *aznauri*—the bride-price is twice as large, i. e., 200 to 400 rubles. According to the data furnished by Margiani,[18] the amount of the

---

[18] Margiani: 76.

[a] [See cat. 116, p 76 -- Analyst]

nachvlash by the commoners reached 120 rubles, and among the 583
aznauri, 240 rubles. Although the payment of the *nachvlash* was forbidden by the authorities in 1885, it did not cease to be practiced by the people.

In spite of the existence of the obligatory payment of the bride-price by the Svan groom, we cannot consider this practice as marriage by purchase, because of the large amount of dowry given to the bride by her relatives.

After the payment of the *nakdanur* and the *nachvlash,* the bride is regarded as belonging to the groom. In case of her desertion or the breaking of their word by the bride's parents, the result is a blood feud or the return of everything given to the bride in addition to the payment of indemnity. Thus marriage among the Svans, as among the other Georgian Highlanders, has the character of a legal business transaction—a contract.

The dowry (*mzithvi*) which the bride brings to the home of her husband, usually exceeds the bride-price. The dowry is formed usually of cattle (cows, horses, sheep), large copper cooking pots, clothing and adornments for the bride such as ear-rings, beads, rings, etc. Land is given as a dowry only when the bride-price (*nachvlash*) is paid by the groom in land. In addition to the dowry, the bride brings with her two oxen-loads of bread and brandy for the relatives of the groom.

Considering the large amount of dowry and the additional 842
expense necessary for the marriage ceremonies which falls heavily 847
upon the bride's family, it is not difficult to understand the current opinion among the Svans that a woman is a source of great expense and material loss for the entire family. This fact, together with the economic conditions of the country, may be were responsible for the practice of infanticide by the Svans, when new-born baby girls were put to death.

The reason for the preference given to boys over girls as 182
expressed in the custom of infanticide is not difficult to comprehend 842
if, in addition to the facts stated above, one takes into consideration 593
the structure of the social organization where every male member is not only the defender of the material and moral interests of the family but is also the sustainer of its physical existence and the

182 guaranty of its propagation. The son is also the caretaker and
842 guardian of the ancestor-worship—the cult of the dead, upon
593 whose good will is believed to depend the well-being and the very existence of the family. Accordingly, the father sees in his son not only the supporter in his lifetime but also the guarantor of the peaceful rest of his soul after death.

847 Besides the economic causes, Professor M. Kovalevsky[16] sees
565 also the influence of socio-political factors responsible for the custom of infanticide, especially in the Princely Svanetia. The inhabitants of this part of the country convinced the author that the subordinate position of the common people and the power of the ruling princes, *Dadeshkeliani*, to seize and put into service or sell into slavery every girl of common birth, was the main reason for the existence of the custom of infanticide in the Princely Svanetia.[a] On the other hand, the people in Free Svanetia[a] blamed the difficult economic conditions as the sole cause of the custom.

847 Although the girl was put to death soon after her birth, the birth of a boy, on the contrary, was the occasion of joy and special celebration.

There were different ways of putting the children to death, such as choking them with hot ashes, strangulation, placing a stone on the stomach, starving them to death by leaving them without any food.[17].

The investigators and travelers who visited the country of the Svans report the existence of infanticide among them and discuss it, expressing their opinions concerning the possible causes of this custom.

Thus the Frenchman, Raphael Bernoville, sees the cause of the custom in economic conditions, the absence in the family of the means to feed and raise the girls. As to the manner of putting the babies to death, he mentions the practice of choking them with ashes. He writes concerning the subject:[18] "Les femmes étant considerées par eux comme des bouches inutiles, lorsque les naissances excédaient le nombre utile des membres de la famille on étouffait sans cérémonie les filles en leur jetant dans la gorge une pincée de cendres." 847

---

[16] Kovalevsky: a, II, 41-4.
[17] Stoianov: 435.
[18] Bernoville: 103.

[a] [see cat. 116, p 4 for Swan territorial divisions -- Analyst]

The Russian investigator, I. A. Bartolomei,[19] relates that during his visit to the country the Svans of the community of Kali were proudly showing him little girls and boasted that they allowed them to live and did not kill them as they used to do in times past. "But in spite of this grace shown toward the female sex," adds Mr. Bartolomei, "I noticed that many of the inhabitants were carefully holding boys in their arms and nursing them with tenderness."

"Formerly the newly-born baby girls were put to death in Svanetia," writes D. Margiani concerning the same subject, and adds: "This custom was widely spread in Svanetia."[20]

The Georgian scientist, D. Z. Bakradze,[21] discusses at length the practice of infanticide by the Svans and regards the current opinion of poverty as the cause of the custom as a false notion. The only explanation, he thinks, is the "inclination of the Svans, like all uncivilized people, to give the preference to babies of the male sex." This statement, given without any justification for the cause of "inclination," cannot be taken as proof, but, on the contrary, it should be mentioned again that the existence of the preference of boys over girls in the Svan communities has no mystical or philosophic foundation, but is purely of economic origin. Besides this point, the information furnished by Mr. Bakradze has many interesting details dealing with the custom. "The number of women in Svanetia," writes Mr. Bakradze, "is considerably smaller than that of men, which is explained by the abominable custom of killing the newly-born girls. Formerly this custom was observed throughout Svanetia. In the house where I passed the night a few years ago, five girls had been put to death. This custom has already fallen into desuetude in Princely Svanetia, and is gradually disappearing in Free Svanetia, thanks to the efforts of the authorities. The opinion prevails among us that the killing of babies was carried

---

[19] Bartolomei: 150.
[20] Margiani: 75.
[21] Bakradze: 45.

847 out by pouring hot ashes into their mouths; but I heard from the Svans themselves that this notion is wrong and that the girls were merely starved to death by leaving them without any food. It is generally believed that the motive for this custom lies in the poverty of the people. But this also is incorrect," adds the author, "because this custom was observed not only by poor people but among the nobility as well. The custom of killing the baby girls is explainable far more simply through the inclination, as among all uncivilized people, to give preference to babies of the male sex." We have already expressed our view as to the unacceptability of the author's opinion set forth in the latter part of the above 525 quotation. However, it should be noted that in Free Svanetia[a] no drastic economic distinction existed between the common people and the nobility. The members of the noble class were almost as poor as the common people; their titles did not signify material wealth. Therefore, adverse economic conditions forced them to follow the example of the lower classes in the practice of infanticide.

162 525 I. A. Bartolomei confirms the foregoing statement in the following words:[22] "In the whole of Free Svanetia there is not

162 DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION IN THE COMMUNITIES OF FREE SVANETIA[a] IN 1887*

Communities	*Homes*	*Both Sexes*	*Males*	*Females*
Ushkul	75	526	284	242
Kali	64	425	236	189
Ipari	133	1027	568	459
Etseri	176	1365	750	415
Pari	80	664	350	314
Lendjeri	71	669	351	318
Chubukhevi	116	996	516	480
Becho	89	704	371	333
Latali	122	994	504	490
Mulakhi	153	1303	702	601
Mestia	102	860	467	493
Total	1181	9533	5099	4334

162 525 one prince. In this democratic country the nobility retained only the right to dine once a year with the descendants of their former

---

[22] Bartolomei: 170.

*From V. J. Teptsov: "Svanetia," Table No. 8, P. 45.

a [see cat. 116, 14 -- Analyst]

peasant subjects, and in the case of blood feuds, such as the 162
wergild, the amount of two 'bloods' was paid for the murder of 565
one nobleman."

On the other hand, the custom of infanticide is responsible for 162
the smaller number of women than men in Svan communities, as [847]
Mr. Bakradze justly remarks. The Russian investigators, N. Dmitriev and V. J. Teptsov, endorse the above statement with statistical data.

In reference to statistical data, it is necessary to note that the peoples of the Caucasus have always shown a mistrust to any kind of census conducted by the Russian government, suspecting only trouble for themselves, such as being drafted into military service, compulsory labor or new taxes. But in spite of this fact, the numbers furnished in the statistical data accumulated by the Russian government, if even approximate and inexact, are helpful in elucidating the matter under discussion.

The statistical tables given by N. Dmitriev and V. J. Teptsov show clearly the differences in the numbers of the sexes composing the population of the country.

The data furnished by Mr. Teptsov[22] were taken from the governmental statistical committee of Kutais, as the author remarks in the introduction of his work.

THE POPULATION IN THE COMMUNITY OF FREE SVANETIA IN 1887*

Communities										
Ushkul	117	28	28	69	101	50	8	16	175	7
Kali	83	14	13	79	96	48	9	9	131	1
Ipari	223	30	44	157	245	83	15	17	308	11
Etseri	269	66	58	222	334	118	22	29	394	17
Pari	113	28	40	133	154	57	5	26	191	6
Lendjeri	151	21	24	122	138	43	17	21	198	4
Chubukhevi	182	38	71	189	294	92	14	18	278	11
Becho	123	29	48	135	163	65	14	20	194	8
Latali	201	35	65	189	220	63	12	20	272	10
Mulakhi	259	60	7	185	307	98	23	38	372	11
Mestia	157	20	55	161	228	61	34	21	205	5
Total	1878	369	546	1641	2208	778	173	235	2718	91
On 1,000 souls of population	197.0	38.7	57.2	172.1	231.6	81.6	18.1	24.6	285.2	9.5

---

[22] Teptsov: Svanetia.

*From V. J. Teptsov: "Svanetia" (1887), Table No. 10, p. 51.

162 "According to official data," writes N. Dmitriev,[24] "at the present time (1895) in Free Svanetia there are not more than 715 homes, with inhabitants of 5,801 souls, comprising 3,116 males and 2,585 females. (See the table: Distribution of the Population in the Communities of Free Svanetia.) The predominance of men above women is explicable through the custom of putting babies of the female sex to death. This custom, according to the testimony of well-informed people, is almost discarded but not entirely, and from time to time is still practiced secretly, without the knowledge of the authorities."

851 The preference of boys over girls and the importance attached to the birth of a male child in a family of Svans is expressed in the custom of the happy father throwing two bullets into the crib of his new-born son. Describing this custom the Frenchman R. Bernoville[25] erroneously regards it as a meaningless degeneration of the Christian rite of baptism, and accordingly he writes concerning the matter: "La baptême, tombé dans beaucoup de lieux en désuétude, est remplacé ici par l'immersion et l'onction simulée par la mère elle-même en présence du papas; là; par une comédie consistant à jeter dans le berceau do nouveau-né une balle du fusil."

The Russian investigator, I. A. Bartolomei, agrees with M. Bernoville that this custom takes the place of Christian baptism, but it has, according to his poinion, at the same time a more significant meaning than baptism. "The ceremony of baptism

162 DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION IN THE COMMUNITIES OF FREE SAVANETIA*

Communities	*Homes*	*Males*	*Females*
Ipari	133	570	459
Kali	64	236	189
Latali	121	506	489
Lendjeri	70	351	317
Mestia	101	468	392
Mulakhi	151	700	596
Ushkul	75	285	243

Total —— 5801 souls of both sexes.

Total —— 5801 souls of both sexes.

---

[24] Dimitriev: 166.

[25] Bernoville: 103.

*Data furnished by N. Dmitrieve, in his work, p. 166. Result of his voyage into Svanetia in the summer of 1895.

among the Svans," writes Mr. Bartolomei,[26] "in the present state 85|
of decline of Christianity, bears evidence of the hopes which are placed in the sons and the constant care shown them by their fathers. The ceremony itself consists of the father throwing two bullets into the crib of the new-born son, one for himself and the other for the baby. These two bullets express the ties with which father and son are bound. In his son the father sees not only the preserver of his family but also a helper in the blood-feud whenever his honor is molested, and vengeance is more important to him than his very life."

Disagreeing with the author in describing this custom as a form of baptism, we admit that the Svan father, in throwing two bullets into the crib, considers one for himself and the other for his son. These two bullets are believed to express the beginning of close ties uniting the father and son. In his son the father sees a helper and defender of their common interests in blood-feuds. So this custom represents neither a degeneration of the Christian custom of baptism nor the mere "comedie," as M. Bernoville thinks. Nor has it any other religious meaning; its sole purpose and intention is entirely practical and vital. By this custom the father and son are bound together for life, to safeguard each other and their family. This Svan custom is similar to the exchange of bullets in the adoption ceremony practiced by the Khevsurs.[27]

Created by living conditions and having a rational basis, the 847
custom of infanticide has been given a superstitious interpretation by the people. Thus the Svans believe that for every girl killed God will send the parents a son. "Through their wild superstition the Svans are convinced," writes the Georgian investigator, D. Z. Bakradze,[28] "that the murder of a daughter is rewarded with the birth of a son." This statement is confirmed by D. Margiani.[29] "The Svan women," he writes, "believed that for killing girls they

---

[26] Bartolomei: 160.
[27] See "Adoption."
[28] Bakradze: 42.
[29] Margiani: 75.

587 were rewarded by God with the birth of babies of the male sex as the answer to their prayers . . ."

583 The practice of infanticide was also responsible for the custom of marriage by abduction, practiced by the Svans. By putting to death the baby girls, there was a consequent shortage of marriageable women. The tables of statistics given above clearly indicate [602] the acuteness of the situation. Thus the table furnished by N. Dmitriev^a/ dealing with the distribution of the population in the communities of Free Svanetia shows that of the total population of 5,801, there are 3,116 males and 2,685 females, which makes 431 fewer women than men. We find the same situation when we consult the tables prepared by V. J. Teptsov. In consequence of this situation the men were obliged to resort to kidnaping and abduction in order to obtain a mate. I. A. Bartolomei and D. Z. Bakradze justly observe that infanticide is responsible for the custom of bride-stealing and abduction. Relating the gradual abandonment by the Svans of the practice of infanticide, Mr. Bartolomei adds:[30] "They told me it would not be necessary for our sons to buy or steal wives for themselves beyond the mountains." D. Z. Bakradze[31] expresses the same opinion. "The result of this custom," he writes, referring to infanticide, "was a diminution in the number of women and the consequent necessity for bride-abduction and the kidnaping of the wives of other men."

[622] The result of the kidnaping of a woman among the Svans was a blood-feud (*litskup*) with all its grave results; or, if an agreement was reached, the payment of indemnity by the abductor consisting of half the amount of the blood-money, called *tsor*, to remove the dishonor, and in addition the usual bride-price (*nachvlash*) in full. On the other hand, when a Svan stole a woman from a neighboring tribe, he was not prosecuted and his action was not even viewed as a crime.

The bride-stealing—marriage by capture—was practiced not only by the Svans but also by all other groups of the Georgian Highlanders and by the Georgians of the Lowlands as well.

---

[30] Bartolomei: 160. a/ [see cat. 116, p84--Analyst]

[31] Bakradze: 46.

If we examine this "custom"[a] and take the facts connected with 583
it as they are in reality at the present time, or were not long ago 182
in the Caucasus, without constructing artificial theories we come to the conclusion that marriage by capture and abduction is not the relic of an ancient institution but the origin and very existence of this "custom" are traceable to various economic, religious, and psycho-sociological factors. Thus in Svanetia the economic conditions were chiefly responsible for the practice of infanticide, which in its turn was the principal cause of bride-stealing and abduction. In addition to the economic causes, the procedure of the marriage ceremonies, particularly the authority of parents in the matchmaking, led to and kept in existence the practice of bride-abduction and marriage by capture, which were mostly accomplished by mutual consent and previous arrangement of the young people, a practice prevailing among all groups of Georgian Highlanders. Therefore the marriage by abduction or by capture in the Caucasus was in many instances a love match; a marriage based on the mutual love of the young couple acting in defiance of the rigid rules of custom and parental will, and according to their own will and sexual inclination; or, on the other hand, we have the abduction of a woman by force, without her consent, as in the previous case. Here we have, as a motive for abduction, the feeling of one party only—the man—who, blinded by passion, adopts a "devil-may-care" attitude, ignoring the usual consequences of such an act, the inevitable blood-feud. So, analyzing the cases of bride abduction among the Georgian Highlanders, we come to the conclusion that they are motivated not by custom but by personal inclinations of the persons involved, who act, not according to custom, but from sheer necessity. Consequently, marriage by capture is not a "custom," but a necessity; because "the word custom is used to apply to the totality of behavior patterns which are carried by tradition and lodged in the group, as contrasted with the more random personal activities of the individual."[32]

We may follow without difficulty the fact proving the validity of our opinion that, with the growing personal liberty of young people and the diminishing power of parental authority in

---

[32] Sapir: 658. [a] [i.e., marriage by capture--Analyst]

583 arranging marriages, the number of marriages by abduction is
182 diminishing rapidly in the various communities.

[784] It should be noted, also, that the practice of firing guns, as a part of the wedding ceremony,[a] is not an indication of the earlier custom of marriage by abduction, when the groom and his kinsmen frequently had to use their firearms; but is merely of religio-magical origin. It is done, as the people believe, to keep the evil spirits away from the married pair.

585 In examining the marriage procedure as performed by the Svans, we discussed briefly the ceremonies of matchmaking and betrothal and the facts connected with them.[b] After the betrothal the wedding ceremony takes place.

Among the Svans the wedding is performed by their illiterate priests, called *papi*. The procedure is a mixture of the Christian ceremonies of the Georgian Church and additional rites which originated in the people's superstition and phantasy. Thus, for example, instead of holding crowns over the heads of the marrying couple, as in the Georgian Church, the Svans use chintz caps specially made for the occasion. The prayers are read in the Georgian language but their meaning is not understood by the people. One prayer is interwoven with another and badly distorted. As a characteristic feature of the ceremony, we must note the ceremonial kissing of the bride and groom, and the sewing of their garments with a needle by the *papi*.

After the wedding ceremony the celebration is arranged in the house of the groom. The bride is led into the house with veiled face. The veil is discarded at the entrance after the bride passes the threshold. The bride passes under crossed daggers—a universal custom among all Georgians and practiced as a protection against the evil spirits. The bride is met in the door by the near relatives of the groom with a cup full of wheat flour—the symbol of abundance and prosperity. The bride takes the cup and slowly walks with it in her hands around the room. Then she is led to the cup containing honey, which she must taste by dipping her finger in it. This custom of giving honey to the bride is universal among all groups of the Georgian nation, and may be interpreted as the symbol of a sweet future conjugal life. After

[a] [See cat. 116, p 77 -- Analyst]
[b] [See cat. 116, p 78 ff -- Analyst]

this ceremony the wedding feast begins with songs, dancing, music and speeches, accompanied by much eating and much more drinking.

The only song, which is sung very slowly at all weddings and everywhere in Svanetia, is as follows:[33]

> "*Kvertsiloba* . . . . *mogvikavs* . . . . *dedupal* . . . .
> "Wedding . . . . We are leading . . . . the bride . . . .
> *bedniard* . . . . *u ogvmarpva i O!*"
> Happy . . . . may she be! O!"

After the feast the relatives of the bride return home and she stays with her husband, contrary to the custom in Khevsuria, where the bride returns to her parents for a certain time after the wedding.

---

[33] Margiani: 77.

CHAPTER VII

SEX AND RELIGION

562 All marriage ceremonies over, the new life begins for the woman in the home of her husband. We have already explained in the section dealing with the family life,[§] of the Georgian Highlanders, the position of a married woman in the family and all prerogatives and duties which she had to perform according to custom. Her position in the family changed for the better with the birth of her first child, especially if the child happened to be a son. We also mentioned previously the special esteem and affection which the people bestowed upon their male descendants and the facts explaining this phenomenon were brought out and discussed.

While the birth of a child improved the status of the mother, in giving her more esteem and a more honorable position in the social group, she attained this position by carrying out all customary formalities connected with the act of childbirth, which were not only rough and stern, but also endangered her life. These customs, have their origin and explanation in the special religious beliefs of the people.

The woman is regarded by the Georgian Highlanders as an unclean being, and there are many rules and customs based on this belief. She is not permitted to enter the building of the *Khati,* nor even the grounds surrounding the sanctuary. During church festivals, which are accompanied by feasts, a separate table is prepared for the women outside the precincts of the *Khati,* where they have a good time of their own.

There are many rules and taboos which regulate the woman's life. These rules, which are still maintained in the secluded Alpine regions of the Highlands, were obeyed and practiced in past times by all the groups of the Georgian nation. Although the beliefs upholding the religious separation of woman have gradually disappeared among the civilized Georgian Lowlanders

[§] [see cat. 116, pp57-62 --Analyst]

and have been abandoned by them, the feeble remnants of the past 562 still linger in the customs of the people mechanically, without their knowing their meaning. Thus, among the Georgians of Megrelia, a woman has no right to kill a chicken or any other edible animal. If she does so, the food which she cooks from it will be regarded as unclean and not edible, and if it happens that at the time of the preparation of dinner no male is present in the home, she asks the assistance of a male member of a neighboring family and her request is readily satisfied.

The separation of the woman is especially strict in times of 841 menstruation and child-birth, when they are carefully avoided. But when the woman is in normal state, i. e., outside the times of menstruation and child-birth, she lives at home with the whole family. This normal state of woman is called in Georgian, *sashinao kopa.*

At the time of menstruation the woman, among the Khevsurs, is given the specific name of *nabosari* and the custom of separation is called *bosloba.* During this time she lives in strict seclusion from her community, in a small hut especially built for this purpose and called *samrevlo,* or *bosseli.*[1] The Russian investigator, V. A. Gurko-Kriajin, relates an interesting episode which happened to a Georgian teacher in Khevsuria. "They told us," writes the author,[2] "about the experience of a Georgian who came as a teacher to Khevsuria. When the winter began the inhabitants of the village categorically demanded that his wife must live apart from him, in the *samrevlo,* during her monthly periods. In order to avoid complying with the request, the teacher announced that his wife was expecting a child and therefore had no menstruation, and in the springtime he secretly left the village."

Every village in Khevsuria has a number of *samrevlos.* The families who are rich enough build their own huts. The women of the poor families possess one *samrevlo* jointly. It may occur, although seldom, that the poor women construct the huts themselves, without any help from the men. But generally the *samrevlo* is built by men, who may belong to any community or

---

[1] Urbneli.

[2] Gurko-Kriajin: 281.

841 tribe of the Caucasus, but not to the one of the Khevsurs. The Khevsur is forbidden to take part in the construction of a *samrevlo*. This rule is enjoined by the *Khati*, the patron saint of the group. If the rule is violated, the Khevsur believes he will be punished by the *Khati*[1]: his herds and flocks will be killed, his whole property destroyed, and he himself will be driven away.

The samrevlo is a small quadrangular hut, so low that a man cannot stand upright in it. It is built of stones, generally without any mortar, with a low roof of straw or timber and mud, with one small door facing the village and one small hole in the roof serving as a window and also as an outlet for smoke. There is no furniture at all, but just some straw on the earthen floor around the hearth in the center, and a few dishes and a jar for water.

784 The women who occupy a *samrevlo*,[2] or, to use the Georgian
841 expression, who are *samrevloth gasuli*—meaning in English, "gone to the *samrevlo*"—strew charcoal around the hut in order to keep away the evil spirits, who are supposed to be afraid of charcoal.

[278] Incidentally, it should be noted that, because of the magical power which the people ascribe to charcoal, it is used in many instances for medical purposes and as protection against the evil spirits, as in the case of the *samrevlo*.

841 These huts of the menstruating women—the *samrevlos* of the Khevsurs and Pshavs—are situated usually together near a river or brook outside the village, about one mile distant from it. Besides the menstruating women, the women with new-born babies [844] also live in the *samrevlo*. They move from the *kokhi*—the special huts for childbirth—into the *samrevlo* within a few days after delivery.

Among the Svans also, as among the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes, the woman with monthly issue is regarded as highly unclean and her husband does not dare at that time to enter the sanctuary (*Khati*) or to bring a sacrifice to the patron saint of the community, because he himself is regarded as unclean and unworthy in the eyes of the deity. Unlike the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes, the Svans do not build special huts for their menstruating women; and the Tushes, whose country is nearer the civilized

[1] [see cat. 116, p25 ff--Analyst]

[2] [i.e., menstrual hut; see cat 116, pp 91-92--Analyst]

part of Georgia and much easier of access, do not have customs 841
as rigid as those of the Khevsurs and Pshavs. The Tush women with monthly issue do not leave their homes, but instead of a *samrevlo* the Tushes make a special addition to the house for the woman in question.

Not only the person of the menstruating woman is regarded as 562
unclean,[a] but also the place of her stay and all objects which are used by her in the time of separation are unclean, and every contact with them is believed to make a man unclean also. Even to pass by or look in the direction of the place of her stay is believed to be enough to make a man unclean and unfitted to enter the sanctuary, depriving him of the support and protection of the patron saint of the community and making his every enterprise a failure. Consequently it is decreed by custom that before every undertaking the man has to cease intercourse with the woman whose nearness pollutes him, and he must prepare himself in order to be clean by the special rules of abstention and purification.

The best example of this is found in the customs of the Svans. According to their beliefs, hunting is a sacred affair,[3] and consequently a hunter has to live a clean life. He has no right to have intercourse with any strange woman but only with his legitimate wife. Even with his own wife he is obliged to cease these relations one day before the hunting expedition. He may not start on the hunt when someone of his womenfolk has a monthly issue, nor even if any woman in his neighborhood is in a similar condition at the time. The Svans believed that a hunter could be successful on his expedition only if he abstained from sexual intercourse and also avoided the proximity of a mother with a newborn babe until they were purified.[4]

Although the customs regulating the relations with the female 562
sex were strict for every male member of the community, even 793
more was required of the attendants and servants of the sanctuary. Thus the shepherds of the *sakhato* flocks—the flocks of the famous sanctuary, *Thamar mepe,* in Pshavia—who were chosen from the members of the congregation for a certain period of time for the

---

[3] This subject is described in detail in the chapter dealing with Contract.

[4] Dmitriev: 167.

[a] [see cat 116, pp 91-92 -- Analyst]

562 793 service of the communal sanctuary, were obliged to abstain from intercourse with women during the whole time of their occupation, in order to be clean and worthy of their sacred work in the eyes of the patron saint of the sanctuary. And as for the immediate attendants of the *Khati*, such as the *khutsi, dekanozi, khevis-beri, dasturi, shulta,* and *mnate,* they are obliged to prepare themselves for every church festival and to lead a pure life of chastity before and during the church holidays. The rigidity of the requirements increases with the rank of the attendants in the service of the *Khati*. Thus, the *shultas* and *mnates* are required to cease relations with their wives for four weeks prior to every church holiday lest they be unclean for their holy service. The requirements for the *dasturi* are more strict than those for the *shultas*. The *dasturi* not only are forbidden to go near their wives for the period of four weeks before the holidays, but they are not even permitted to pass near a *samrevlo,* lest they become unclean. The *khutsis, khevis-beris* and *dekanozis* are obliged to be examples of purity and chastity for the entire congregation. Besides abstaining from intercourse with their wives for four weeks, as the other attendants of the *Khati* are required to do, before every church holiday they have to prepare themselves for the holy office with special fasting and baths. They are not allowed to pass near a *samrevlo*,[A] or even look toward one from a distance, and if they accidentally come near a *samrevlo* they must turn their face away from it and pass by, looking in another direction, because even a look would be enough, according to the beliefs of the people, to make them unclean and unfit for the sacred services in the *Khati*.

These regulations are scrupulously followed at the present time. For example, the Russian investigator, V. A. Gurko-Kriajin, who visited the country of the Khevsurs in the summer of 1927, was an eye-witness of the above-mentioned customs. "It is interesting to note," writes Mr. Gurko-Kriajin,[5] that the men not only are forbidden to visit these women's huts (the *samrevlos*), but it is not recommended to them even to pass in their vicinity. When in Shatil,[6] I myself observed a priest, the *khevis-beri* of the local

---

[5] Gurko-Kriajin: 281.

[6] A village in Khevsuria.

[A] [i.e., menstrual hut -- Analyst]

sanctuary, making a great turn in his way in order that he might 562
not pass near the *samrevlo* and thus pollute himself." 793

All objects and vessels used by a woman during the time of her separation in the menstrual hut (*samrevlo*) are regarded as unclean, and before returning home at the end of her abnormal state, she is obliged to scrub and clean them thoroughly. In times past they were thrown away. Besides this, she washes her clothes and takes a special bath, which among the Khevsurs is a very unusual affair.

The customs observed by the woman in time of menstruation 793
are, comparatively, not so rigid as those required of the woman 562
in childbed.

Pregnant women also are regarded as unclean, even in a much greater degree than those in menstruation. They are called *umretskhlo*. The woman with child tries to conceal her condition as long as possible, but when she feels the approach of the critical moment, she is obliged to leave her home and stay apart in a small hut built for the purpose and called *sachekhi* or *kokhi*. However, according to V. Bardavelidze-Lomia,[7] the term *sachekhi* connotes, not the hut itself, but a place outside the village where all the *samrevlos*,[a] and *kokhis* are located.

The word *kokhi* means, in Georgian, a hut. Unlike the *samrevlo*, it is built by women only, usually by those who are living in the *samrevlo* at the time. The *kokhi* is much smaller and simpler in structure than the *samrevlo*. Sometimes it is built adjacent to a *samrevlo*, so that one of *samrevlo's* walls is used as a wall of the *kokhi*. It is partially floored with boards and straw; there is no window or place for a fire (hearth) as in the *samrevlo*. The hut is so small that it can accommodate only one woman, allowing a small space for her baby. The whole furniture consists of a jar for water, a wooden plate for bread or other food, and the straw spread on the earthen floor, upon which the woman lies and which is called *salogine*, from the Georgian word *logini*, meaning a bed.

In the cold semi-darkness of the *kokhi* the woman bears her 844
child; only little girls or old women are allowed to bring her food.

---

[7] Bardavelidze-Lomia: 247.

[a] [menstrual hut -- Analyst]

844 In past times the woman was left alone in the *kokhi,* without any assistance, even in the winter time when it is exceedingly cold in the mountain region. She bore her child alone, without even a fire or warm water; and often she chewed off the umbilical cord with her teeth.

There are special beliefs connected with the umbilical cord and the placenta (afterbirth). The placenta is buried in a place where "no human being or animal can disturb it or tread upon it." The placenta is regarded as unclean and in the meantime as possessing some supernatural power, a belief which I had the opportunity of observing in Megrelia. Visiting one of my acquaintances in the village of Tekladi, I found a whole house in commotion. From the bedroom came the cries and groans of a woman in travail. Soon the cry of the baby let me know that the delivery was over, and a young girl came out of the house onto the porch where I was sitting. She had in her hands a pan containing the afterbirth. The old woman who was conducting the delivery came after her and gave orders to the girl to bury the contents of the pan in the least frequented part of the yard, where "no living being could disturb it," and then to wash her hands thoroughly. While the old woman was giving these instructions she was crossing herself and saying in the Megrelian language: *"Goronti dikhuamu skani sakheli,"* meaning in English: "Lord, may Thy name be sanctified."

846 In the *kokhi*[1] the woman stays only a few days after her child's birth. When she feels strong enough she moves from the *kokhi* to the hut of the menstruating women, the *samrevlo*. In order to have access to the *samrevlo* the mother and her baby are obliged to go through special rules of purification. This is required because a woman with a child is regarded as much more unclean and dangerous than those in menstruation. This belief explains why the women of the *samrevlo* frequently object to having a *kokhi* built close to their hut.

The custom of purification which must be observed by the mother and her child in moving from the *kokhi* to the *samrevlo* is as follows: The woman burns the straw (*salogine*). Among the Khevsurs she burns down the whole *kokhi;* but the Pshavs do not burn the hut. After this she takes the "holy" water into her mouth

[1] [i.e., hut; see cat 116, p95 -- Analyst]

and sprinkles the baby and its belongings with it, as well as the 846
path which she used in going to the brook for water or other needs.
Only after this procedure is she permitted to leave the *kokhi* and
move over with her child into the *samrevlo.*

The rules of the final purification required of the woman in 783
order to enter her home and community after childbirth are more 562
complicated in detail. Not only the mother and her baby, but all objects used by her during the time of her separation, and even the members of her family, are regarded as unclean and are called *shereulni,*[8] and have no right to enter the *Khati*[1] until the purification presented by custom is performed. The ceremony of purification required after the childbirth for the mother and her baby and the sanctification of her house is known as *sanathlo* or *sakhlis sanathlavi.*[9]

Two weeks after the birth of the child, the head priest of the community, the *khutsi,* kills a sheep as a sacrificial offering to God on the roof of the house. Two weeks later, about the time of the return of the mother and the baby, the same kind of sacrifice is made by the *khutsi.* At this time he catches the blood of the slain animal in a cup and sprinkles the walls, pillars, and door-posts of the house with it. Only after this ceremony is the whole family regarded as clean again and entitled to enter the *Khati.* Prior to this moment the father does not come near the baby, which is regarded as unclean as its mother.

The details of the custom of "purification" or cleansing, as observed by the Khevsurs, may be understood from the following description.[10] After moving from the *kokhi* into the *samrevlo,*[2] the woman stays there from four to six weeks. During this time she is engaged in field work. When she returns to the house of her husband and family, she is obliged to put herself and her baby, as well as all her belongings—everything that she brings from the *samrevlo*—through the process of purification, which consists of three different parts: The first part of the purification is called in Georgian, *matusva;* it consists of the following: the woman

---

[8] Eristov: 114.
[9] Urbneli.
[10] Bardavelidze-Lomia: 250.

[1] [i.e., sanctuary -- Analyst]
[2] [see cat 116, pp 95-96 -- Analyst]

783 passes everything, one after another, over the fire, and at this
562 time she is obliged to say the words established by custom: "Fire,
give thy purity." After the *matusva,* she must put the things out of the *samrevlo* and shake them well. This is the second part of the purification and is called *gamotskepa.* And at last she must sprinkle everything with holy water which is brought to her for this purpose from the home. She takes the water into her mouth and so sprinkles the things. This last part of the purification is called *shapkhukeba.*

Only after the accomplishment of all the above-mentioned tasks are the woman, her baby and belongings regarded as clean and as having the right to enter the home of her family.

278 The "holy" water which is used by the woman for the purification is the water which is blessed by the preacher during the church ceremonies in commemoration of Christ's baptism. The people take the water home and preserve it in bottles for such future use as cleansing, purifying, and medical purposes. This custom is in universal use throughout Georgia. I remember seeing such bottles in many houses. The water is regarded by the people as medicine against almost every kind of disease: such as sore eyes, stomach trouble, headache, etc.

844 Among the Svans also, the woman lying in childbed is regarded
562 as unclean and is put in a separate place but not in a special hut built for her sojourn. The woman is in isolation and in considered as unclean until the priest says special prayers of purification upon her and the baby. Not only contact, as was mentioned above concerning the women in menstruation, but even the mere presence of such a woman in the neighborhood makes a hunter polluted and consequently unable to take part in the hunting expedition.

844 When the Khevsur woman is in travail during childbirth and
787 her loud screams and cries are heard far from the *kokhi,* her husband and relatives approach the hut and with loud shouts fire their guns in order to keep away evil spirits. Or sometimes the husband runs into the hut, places his gun on the shoulder of his suffering wife, and shouts to her words of encouragement while firing his gun. He does this only with the aim of driving

away the evil spirits, who, as they believe, are torturing the woman. 844 This custom is preserved at present in the inaccessible mountain 789 regions of the Caucasus, and was in ancient times practiced in the whole of Georgia, with the difference that instead of a gun the man used his bow and arrow.

This belief in the existence of the evil spirits attacking the 776 woman in childbed and the new-born baby prevails among all 782 groups of the Georgian Highlanders. Thus the Khevsurs believe 846 that the evil spirits who attack the mother and the babe are small black creatures, countless in number and called *dobilebi.*[11] The people believe that the *dobilebi* live among the old deserted homes (ruins) in the village or its vicinity. Such places are known to the Khevsurs as the *banurani.* The evil spirits (*dobilebi*) annoy and disturb the human beings, although they cannot kill them. The *dobilebi* especially seek women and babies, especially children when they are ill. This is regarded by the Khevsurs as the cause of the attack of the *dobilebi,* which they express in the following words: *"Dobilthashi gekhviv."* In order to drive the evil spirits from the ill child it is necessary, as they believe, for the whole family to observe the custom called *ashlis dashla.* It consists of taking forty-five cakes, or, as they say in Georgian, *samjer khuthmeti,* meaning "three times fifteen" (from the Georgian words, *sami,* meaning three, and *khuthmeti,* meaning fifteen). Besides these forty-five pieces of bread, a special large cake is baked with cheese or meat filling and smeared on top with butter. This large cake is called *satsinao.* All these cakes are brought to the place of residence of the evil spirits and thrown to the village children, who, having been informed beforehand, are waiting by the ruins (*banurani*). The child who succeeds in catching the large cake (the *satsinao*) is regarded as the luckiest. Instead of bringing cakes, the Khevsurs sometimes kill a goat in the *banurani.* In this case the head of the animal belongs to the man who killed it and the rest to the owner.

This custom of bringing the cake or killing the animal in the *banurani*—the place regarded as the residence of the evil spirits—

---

[11] Bardavelidze-Lomia: 254-5.

776 is nothing else than bringing a sacrifice to them in order to appease
782 their anger and make them favorably disposed to allow the ill
846 child to live.

Besides the babies and their mothers, according to the opinion
776 of the Khevsurs, the evil spirits (*dobilebi*) also attack the women
844 in general, and consequently every misfortune occurring to a woman is ascribed to the *dobilebi*. The Pshavs believe that a woman with child is pursued by the evil spirit called *matsuli*, who tries to change her baby.

Belief in the existence of evil spirits who attack babies and women prevails not only among the Khevsurs and other Georgian Highlanders, but also among all groups of the Georgian nation. Such beliefs are likewise encountered among other peoples of the Caucasian peninsula, and far away beyond the Caucasus among the peoples of Asia Minor.

Thus, the Georgians of the province of Kakhethi[12] believe in the existence of the evil creature called *Ali*, which is represented as a beautiful girl with golden locks. She enters the room of the woman in childbed and is able to kill with one stroke both mother and child.

The Georgians of Karthli and the mountain region called Mthiulni also know the creature *Ali*, which resembles in appearance and character the one described above.

The Georgians believe, according to Dr. J. Reineggs,[13] that the evil spirits—the *Luftgeister*, as he calls them in German—attack with great glee the mother and the new-born baby.

The Georgians of Meskhethi[14] have an evil spirit called the *avi-soli*, which enters the house where the woman is lying in childbed and endangers her and her child's well-being. The name *avi-suli* means "evil soul," formed from the Georgian words, *avi* (evil) and *suli* (soul).

Besides these examples, showing the belief of some of the Georgian groups in the existence of evil spirits attacking the mother and baby, similar beliefs are held by all other groups of the Georgian nation, as we shall see in reviewing their customs in protecting women and children against evil forces. 776 844

---

[12] Chursin: a, 50; also e, 26.
[13] Reineggs: 112-113.
[14] Khakhanov: b, 10-11.

As we noted previously, similar beliefs concerning the matter 171 under discussion[1] are held by other peoples of the Caucasus and 776 by the peoples of Asia Minor. Thus the Abkhazians[15] are con- 844 vinced that the evil spirit whom they call *abu-ikou* attacks women in childbed.

The mountaineers of Daghestan[16] have a being similar to the 171 *ali* of the Georgians,[2] who is regarded as very dangerous for women in childbed and is called *Alpab,* meaning "red woman." *Alpab* is presented as a creature of very small stature, about the size of a three-year-old girl, with long red hair touching her heels. Although *Alpab* is beautiful and seems to be good-natured and harmless, in reality she is very malignant and cruel, and tries with all her power to destroy the human race.

The Jewish mountaineers of Daghestan[17] also believe in the existence of evil spirits of the female sex, similar in character to *Alpab* in Daghestan and called by them *Dedei-ol,* meaning the "mother-ol."

The Turks of Azerbaijan believe in the existence of a creature which destroys mothers and new-born babies, and which is called *Al-anasi*.

The Turks of Shemakha district[18] have a female being called *Al* with a cat's snout and red hair. She pulls out women's hair and throws it into the water and kills babies by poisoning them with her own milk.

The Udins of Vartashen[19] think that there is a creature called *Hal* which attacks the woman with child. *Hal* tries to kill the woman by taking out her heart and liver.

The Talishes[20] of the southern part of the Lencoran district also have a belief in the existence of an angry, bloodthirsty creature who attacks the mother and baby. She is represented as a black

---

[15] Derjavin: 15.
[16] Mamedov.
[17] Anisimov: 43.
[18] Djegangir.
[19] Bejanov: 245, 260.
[20] Chursin: e, 25.

[1] [see cat. 116, p100 -- Analyst]
[2] [see cat. 116, p. 100 -- Analyst]

178 woman and is called *Alajen*. *Alajen* has large eyes and such enormous breasts that she casts them over her shoulders. She enters the room where the mother and baby are and frightens the woman by her appearance and sometimes even beats her and kills the baby.

The Kurds of Azerbaijan[31] believe that the creature called *Halanisi* attacks the woman in childbirth and tears her heart and lungs out and washes them in the river. The Kurds of Armenia[32] believe in the same creature and call her *Alk*. Under the same name, *Alk* or *Alk'u*, she is known to the Armenians also.

The most gruesome tribe of the demoniac world of the Armenian myths was that of 'Als'. . . . They appear as half-animal and half-human beings, shaggy and bristly. They are male and female, and have a mother. . . . The 'Als' have a king living in Abysses, whom they serve. . . . The 'als' were formerly disease demons who somehow came to restrict their baleful activities to unborn children and their mothers. They attack the latter in childbirth, scorching her ears, pulling out her liver, and strangling her along with the unborn baby. They also steal unborn children of seven months, at which time they are supposed in the East to be fully formed and mature. . . . Identical, or at least very closely connected with the 'als' is 'Thelpa,' who by sitting upon a woman in childbirth causes the child to become black and faint and to die.[33]

179 The Persians[34] believe that the *Al* has the appearance of a tall, beautiful girl with red hair, from which is derived the name *Al*, meaning red in general. As she attacks the woman in travail, she rends her heart.

Coming to later Pahlavi-Parsi books,[35] we find that the *Shayast la-Shayast* (X, H, XII, 11) directs that, when it is known that a woman has become pregnant, a fire shall be maintained most carefully in the house. The house of the family that does not keep the fire properly has fewer pregnant women in it (*Shayast la-Shayast*, XII.3). The Sad-dar (XVI.1) also gives this direction. The remnant of this injunction survives in the present custom, among 171 modern Parsis, on the occasion of the completion of the fifth and seventh months of pregnancy, when a lamp of clarified butter is lighted in the house by some families. The reason assigned for this is that the fire so kindled in the house keeps out *daevas*, i. e., evil influences from the house.

---

[31] *Ibid.*, c, 4.
[32] Egiazarov: 59.
[33] Ananikian: 88-9.
[34] Chursin: c, 26.
[35] Modi: 660.

The Babylonians[26] believed in the existence of the dreadful child-slaying creature, the demoness called *Lamashtu.* Her character was inherited by a creature prominent in later Jewish Demonology. *Lilith*[27] was the head of the female demons and was regarded as the incubus and with a demoniac first wife of Adam, who became in the course of time the demon who bewitched, stole, changed, and killed both children and mothers in child-birth. There were many demons who sought new-born children, but the most dangerous among them was the above mentioned *Lilith.*

Among the Summerians[28] the most dreaded of all demons was *Lamme,* or *Lamashtu* in Acadian, the female vampire who slew children, drank the blood of men, and ate their flesh. This name passed into Greek mythology as *Lamia,* derived from another name for her, *Lam-me-a.*

Believing in the existence of malignant spirits and the danger 789
of their attack upon women in childbed and their babies, the 846
people have adopted such special protective devices as certain actions, objects, words, and even the use of colors regarded as possessing magical powers.

One of the customs used to protect mother and child against evil aggressions is the day-and-night watch.

The first days after the child's birth are regarded by the people as the most dangerous, because the mother and child are so weak that they cannot resist the demoniac forces. Therefore, they are carefully guarded both by day and by night.

The Georgians of Imerthi consider the first fifteen days as the 846 most critical in the life of the child, and therefore exercise special watchfulness during this period. In order to protect the baby

---

[26] Langdon: 366.
[27] Gaster: 655.
[28] Langdon: 366.

846 every night during its first two weeks of life, a group comprising mostly young people is assembled in the room with the mother and pass the nights in games, dancing and music. These nightly vigils have a special name in Georgian, *hamis theva,* meaning "watch night."

The Georgians of Guria[29] also observe the custom of *hamis theva,* but only for one night, either one week or two weeks after the child is born.

The Georgians of Megrelia also have the custom of observing the night watch, which is called in their language *serish takhua,* meaning "vigilant night." Literally the Megrelian expression, *serish takhua,* means in English, "breaking of a night," from the Megrelian words, *seri* (night) and the verb, *takhua* (to break).

870 Besides the Georgians, the same custom of night watch is observed by other peoples of the Caucasus. For example, the Karachais[30] regard the first seven days after the birth of the child as the most dangerous, and in order to protect the child from the attack of evil spirits the young girls are assembled in the room with the mother and baby, and pass the time in games while watching the child. The seventh night is regarded by them as the most dangerous and has the special name, *stim keche* or *bastiri klangan,* which means "the night of nightmare."

Among the Talish, on the sixth day after the birth of the child, to protect it from the attack of the evil spirit called *Shasha,* the relatives and friends of the family keep the watch-night. They keep the light the whole night through in the room where the baby is, and place a fish net over the crib. In case they fall asleep, they place bread and milk at the entrance of the room, on the porch, so that, as they think, *Shasha* will eat it and will not touch the child.

787 Besides watching the mother and child against possible attack
844 by the evil spirits, the people resort for protection to the magical
751 powers of different objects. Among them the most important in the Caucasus is plain iron, or such objects as daggers, sabres, sickles, axes, awls, knives (especially with black handles), etc.

---

[29] Mamaladze: 155.

[30] Chursin: e, 28.

Besides iron objects, other things frequently used for magical 789 purposes are charcoal, rope in imitation of a snake, red thread, 744 and fish net; and it may be added that they believe in the protec- 751 tive and cleansing power of fire.

However, of all the objects used for magical purposes, the people in the Caucasus regard iron as the most important.

So the Khevsur woman[31] expecting a child must have under her pillow, especially for the occasion, a sabre called in Georgian *kajistmiani khmali,* which represents a sabre with the allegorical picture of the evil spirit.

The Pshavs,[32] neighbors of the Khevsurs, give to the woman in childbed a dagger and a pig's tooth as protection against the evil spirit called *matsuli.* The Pshavs believe that the evil spirit is afraid of the pig's tooth and dagger, and will leave the woman and babe undisturbed.

Among the Georgian mountaineers of Karthli the woman preparing herself for delivery places around her bed such iron things as an awl, a sickle, an axe, a knife with a black handle, and other iron objects.

The Georgians of the Thelav district, department of Tiflis, in order to keep a child quiet and safely protected from evil spirits, put into the child's crib such pieces of iron because they believe the evil spirit will avoid them.

The same Georgians,[33] when carrying a child on a night trip, consider it necessary to protect it from evil spirits by putting a knife and a piece of charcoal in its bed-linen, because the people think that evil spirits are afraid of these things. And for the protection of the mother from the evil spirits, they put a dagger or sabre under her pillow. It is also interesting to note the custom of the same group of Georgians to lighten the sufferings of women in travail. If a woman is in travail, her husband must bring water in the skirt of his hand and give a drink to her. Or sometimes they invite a man who has chanced to set free a frog from the mouth of a snake. He approaches the suffering woman and,

---

[31] Bardavelidze-Lomia: 238.
[32] Khizanashvili: 138.
[33] Stepanov: 63, 81.

789 giving her water to drink, says: "Child, separate from the mother,
844 as I have separated the frog from the snake!"

761 In this last-mentioned custom we have the belief in the magical power of the action of separation with the same object of helping the woman in travail and speeding the delivery as is used in other actions, such as opening, division, unlocking, emptying, etc.

The Georgians of Imerethi,[34] in order to protect the child from the evil spirits, put in its cradle, under the pillow, a knife with a black handle, and charcoal. Many pregnant women carry a knife with them during the day, and at night keep them under their pillows—for the purpose of keeping the evil spirits and their dangerous influence away from them.

Among the Georgians of the province of Ratcha[35] the woman delivers her child in a separate room. She is put, not on a bed, but on straw which is spread on the floor. And as the woman is very weak by this time, they believe that the evil spirit may easily seize her *sheipkros,* as they say in Georgian. To avoid this danger, they put under her pillow the holy image of the Virgin Mary and a dagger, as in their opinion the two-edged dagger is the only weapon of which the evil spirit is afraid.

In this case we have the usual mixture in the Caucasus of the old primitive beliefs with Christianity. The image of the Virgin Mary is endowed with the same magical power of protection from evil spirits as a piece of iron—the dagger.

778 The belief in the magical power of a dagger (iron) is clearly manifested in the customs of the Pshavs,[36] observed during the marriage ceremony, when the brother of the bride, at the time of the procession around the house-hearth, strikes with his dagger the iron chain called *sakideli,* in order to keep the evil spirits away from the bride. The dagger is considered by the Pshavs, as we mentioned previously,[37] as a sacred object, *samkhtho sagania,* and drives evil spirits away.

---

[34] Mashrko: 306.
[35] Japaridze: 138.
[36] Khizanashvili: 125.
[37] See Chapter VI on Marriage.

In describing the customs of the Georgian Highlanders and the 326
Georgians in general pertaining to the protection of women and 778
children against the aggression of evil spirits, we found that iron 787
is regarded by them as possessed with special magical power.[a] Not only iron as a metal, but also the profession connected with it, as that of a blacksmith, is viewed by the people as supernatural and endowed with magical power. This is clearly seen in the beliefs of the Georgians of Samurzagan.[18]

Not only iron as a metal, but also the blacksmith's trade, all objects associated with it, and the person of the blacksmith himself are regarded by the people as endowed with supernatural or magical powers. The people look with reverence and fear on the blacksmith's anvil. They expect from it the healing of the sick and help in all kinds of difficulties of their earthly life. They take the oath upon the anvil and are convinced that the oath-breaker will be severely punished with some kind of misfortune. Believing in the supernatural power of the anvil, they offer to it numerous gifts, consisting of goats, oxen, and money. Some do this out of gratitude, others from fear. One suspected of theft or a debtor refusing to meet his obligations is compelled to take the oath on the anvil in order to clear himself of suspicion.

Like the blacksmith's anvil, the person of the blacksmith also 791
is held in high esteem by the people. The blacksmith is regarded 326
as a diviner and sorcerer. If someone is ill he sends one of his relatives or friends to the blacksmith for help and to find out the cause of the illness. The blacksmith either satisfies the petitioner himself or announces secretly in a mysterious way that the affliction is sent either as punishment for some wrong committed by the ill person or simply that the anvil demands from the stricken person a fitting offering. Usually the kind of offering is indicated, as a white goat with straight horns, or a brown ox with a long tail reaching to the ground, or perhaps money. It is necessary to note that in naming the animals to be offered or the money to be paid, the blacksmith takes into consideration the economic status of the petitioner, and in his choice sacrifical

---

[18] Machavariani, D., and Bartolomei, A.: 74-83.

[a] [see cat 116, p104-106 -- Analyst]

791 animals, he usually selects the best breed known in the community.
326 If after consultation with the blacksmith and presentation of the offering the sick man recovers, the result is fame and new presents and offerings to the blacksmith and his anvil; but in the event the man dies, the explanation is that the relatives of the sick person did not know how to appease the anvil, or they did not apply to the right blacksmith's shop and anvil, as it should have been, etc. These superstitious beliefs of the people give to the blacksmiths, besides the profits mentioned, a further advantage in that they may keep the doors of their homes and shops wide open during the day or night without fear of having their property stolen, despite the fact that the people are not very strict in the proper interpretation of the words "mine" and "thine."

[170] Beliefs similar to those just described concerning the supernatural power of iron are found among other peoples of the Caucasus. For example, the Circassians have a special deity, the protector of blacksmiths, called *Tliebse,* about whom M. Taitbout de Marigny[39] relates that "le jour de sa fete, on fait, en son honneur, des libations sur un soc et une hache. . . ."

783 Besides using iron as a protective power against evil creatures,
843 the people use fire also. Thus the Georgians of Imerethi[40]
372 believe that the evil being of the woods, called *chinka,* is afraid of the fire. In the evening, no one is permitted to enter the room of a pregnant woman without previously warming himself before the fire in the fire-place. If one neglects to take this precaution, the evil spirit may follow the newcomer into the room and drive the woman mad.

Among the Georgians of Meskhethi,[41] if a traveler comes at night into a house where there is a woman with child, he must first cleanse himself of the evil spirit (*qvi suli*) who may otherwise enter the room with him. In order to avoid this danger and to cleanse the traveler, he is required to jump over a burning pile and allow himself to be sprinkled with holy water.

---

[39] Taitbout de Marigny: b, 309.
[40] Mashurko: 369.
[41] Khakhanov: b, 11.

The same cleansing power of fire is used by the Khevsur woman 783
at the time of her purification when she leaves the menstrual hut 844
(*samrevlo*) and returns home with her baby.

Many other peoples of the Caucasus share the Georgians' belief 170
in the supernatural power of fire.[42] Thus, for example, the Abkhazians,[43] in order to protect women in childbed from the evil spirit, called *abn-ikou,* ask the help of the god of the house-hearth, called *ajakhar,* promising him a thank-offering for his help.

The people also believe in the protective power of a rope in the 789
shape of a snake. For example, in the district of Sakatali, a rope 844
resembling a snake is laid around the woman in childbed and the people continually fire their guns, because they believe that evil spirits are afraid of snakes and gun-shots.

In some parts of Georgia red thread is also used as a defense against the evil spirits attacking women in childbed. In such cases, the hip of the woman in travail is bound with red thread as a means of providing sympathetic magic which will protect her from evil spirits[44] who, as the people think, cause the suffering.

It should be interesting to mention briefly the belief of the 782
Georgians, not only in the magical power of red thread, but in the 753
red color generally. Almost every contagious disease is understood by the people to be sent not merely by evil spirits but as personifications of the spirits themselves.[45] Therefore, to cure the sick it is necessary, in their opinion, to please the spirits. The spirits are called *batonebi,* meaning "lords," the plural form of the Georgian word, *batoni,* meaning a lord. In order to appease and beseech the *batonebi*[46] to depart from sick persons, they try to please them with songs, music, prayers, decorating the room with gay colors, putting on a new dress, keeping everything clean, avoiding any disturbances, etc.

The principal color in decorating and dressing is red. This 755
color predominates, and red thread is used as a protective

---

[42] **Chursin: f.**

[43] **Derjavin: 14-15.**

[44] **Jashvili: 63.**

[45] **Stepanov: 88-9.**

[46] **Mamaladze: 45-6.**

755 measure. For example, if someone is ill with smallpox or measles, his neighbors stretch red thread around their fences and bind the waists of their children with red thread, because they believe it has the power to stop the disease. I remember seeing the children wearing such arm-bands for two weeks, when the child of one of our neighbors was ill with measles. And in the family of the sick an offering is brought to the *batonebi.* The offering consists of a hen, if the ill person is a girl, or a cockerel if it be a boy. The head, wings and legs of this fowl are painted red and the fowl is turned loose in the yard. Among the Georgians of Imerti,[47] when the sick person has recovered, the offered fowl is killed, cooked, and, together with cakes specially baked for the purpose, is taken into the nearby forest and put in such a place that "no human hand can reach them." The food and dishes are left in the woods and it is strictly forbidden to touch them. The Georgians of Megrelia also give similar offerings to the *batonebi,* as mentioned, with the difference that the fowl is permitted to live to senility, when it is killed and eaten by the family sacramentally.

787 844 In addition to the above-mentioned objects used as protection against evil spirits, the fish net is also regarded as a powerful medium.

The belief in the protective power of the fish net against the evil spirits attacking the mother in childbed and her babe was universal throughout Georgia in past times, and survives in different parts of the country today.

Interesting information concerning this matter is found in the work of Dr. J. Reineggs.[48] He relates that in order to protect the woman in childbed and her babe from the attack of evil spirits, the Georgians observe the custom of placing a sword or dagger beneath the pillow of the mother. And over the blanket of her bed is spread a red fish net, and at its sides lead bullets are fastened in order to keep the net in equilibrium on all sides and make it impossible for the evil spirits to penetrate the covers. In

---

[47] Sagaradze: 13-14.
[48] Reineggs: 112-113.

such an uncomfortable position the woman must remain for forty 789
days before she will be permitted to breathe fresh air or leave 844
the bed. "She exposes herself to every possible danger," adds the author, "if she at this time trims her hair or cuts her nails."

The belief in the magical power of the fish net is also expressed 755
in special prayers[49] used for the healing of sick people of their afflictions, as, for example, in the prayers of the Georgians of Guria[50] to cure a cold, known by the name of *ujmuri*. *"Kirkali* is good," is said in the prayer. "Fish net by the head, the hackle-comb by the side," etc. The fish net is used also in the prayers recited at the time of childbirth by the Georgians of Meskheti.[51]

The pieces of such a net are kept sometimes in the house for 787
this purpose. In the Museum of the Georgian Society of History 844
and Ethnography, situated in Tiflis, is conserved a net specially made to cover the bed of a woman in childbirth. This net is made of red silk thread and is bestrewn with spangles. It was brought to the Museum from the upper part of Imerethi.[52]

Here, as in the case described by Dr. Reineggs, we have the net of red color which may be regarded as more powerful than the ordinary net, because to the magical power of the net is added the power of red thread and the color itself.

The Georgians of Imerethi,[53] to safeguard a woman with child, stretch a fish net from the ceiling over her bed, put a dagger under her pillow, and an axe on the threshold of the room. The evil spirit, they think, may be frightened by the axe and will not dare to enter the woman's room; but in case this obstacle fails to stop him, he surely will be scared of the net, in which he may be ensnared, and upon the dagger, as upon the axe, he may cut himself. With all these precautions taken, the evil spirits will by no means disturb the mother and the babe.

The same custom was formerly observed also by the Georgians of Megrelia. In the seventeenth century, at the time of the

---

[49] Chursin: 0, 222.
[50] Mamaladze: 103-4.
[51] Khakhanov: b, 11.
[52] Chursin: *Ibid.*
[53] Mashurko: 306.

789 residence in Megrelia of the Italian missionary, Archangelo 844 Lamberti, this custom was in common use in the country. "As the most important means against the evil spirits," writes [752] Lamberti,[54] "they (the Megrelians) regard the fish net with which they cover the beds of the sick and the cradles of the children. With this net they think to cleanse the air of witchcraft and the 'evil eye,' which, as they believe, is dangerous to the sick person. Besides, in order to frighten the devil, they put under the pillow of the sick person an unsheathed sword and also a spear or some other weapon."

In order to protect the woman in childbed, the Georgians of Meskhethi[55] nail a horse shoe or iron chain on the threshold of the room, because they believe that the evil spirit (*avi suli*) will not dare to step over them and enter the room. The mother and the baby are covered with the net, and at the mother's head they put a dagger and a spit with three onions upon it, as they believe that the odor of the onions is disgusting to the *avi suli*. The dagger and the spit, as iron things, are regarded by them as the best means of repulsing the evil spirits. But to make safety certain, besides the above measures, it is necessary also, they think, to say a special prayer for the occasion which must be repeated by the woman with child.

Among the Georgians of Guria,[56] the woman expecting a child is called in Guria *melogine*, meaning "the laying in bed," from the Georgian word, *logini* (bed).[57] After the birth of the child as soon as the woman is put to bed, the dagger is placed under her pillow, the iron hackle-comb is put under her bed, and upon the bed is hung the fish net. This is done with the aim of keeping away the evil spirits from the mother and babe, whom it likes to attack. The net, dagger and comb are used in this case as the objects of which, according to the people's opinion, the evil spirit is afraid.

---

[54] Lamberti: 168.
[55] Khakhanov: b, 10.
[56] Jorbenadze: 246.
[57] Mamaladze: 92.

Until the mother regains her strength and recovers entirely, she 846
is never left alone during day or night, because she may be 783
frightened by something, as the people say.

After the woman has been delivered of her child, a priest is invited, who sprinkles the house with holy water.

This invitation of the priest and the sprinkling of the house with holy water is nothing more than the process of purification which is practiced in the whole of Georgia, and represents the survival of the old beliefs when the women were regarded as unclean and lived apart, and the rules of purification after childbirth were observed. These views and customs have been replaced by [178]
others and forgotten in the Lowlands of Georgia, but they still hold ground, as we have seen from the examples given in the previous discussion of the Alpine communities of the Khevsurs, Pshavs, Tushes, and Svans, although there also they are not static but changing, dying gradually under the pressure of civilization.

In reviewing this chapter, dealing with the customs and beliefs 000
of the Georgian Highlanders regulating the peculiar position of woman in society based on the religious beliefs of the people, our aim has been to present facts, avoiding as much as possible any generalizations and especially the construction of theories in order to explain the origin and meaning of the customs described.

We think that any attempt to explain the origin of the customs in question is, for the present, premature. The scientific knowledge of the subject is still unsatisfactory,[58] and especially in the field of the ethnological researches in the Caucasus, where the science of ethnology is in its very infancy.[59] On the other hand, the possibility of a great future for ethnological investigation in the Caucasus is not difficult to predict.

Expressing our opinion of the necessity of precaution, as above stated, we have in mind the interesting work by V. Bardavelidze-Lomia, frequently cited in this chapter. This valuable work was of great assistance in discussing the subject in question, for which I am cordially thankful to the author. But allow me to mention,

---

[58] Lowie: b, 205-6. 3 [see cat, 116, p 90 ff -- Analyst]
[59] Chitaia:
[60] Chursin: d.

000 not by way of criticism, that, as helpful and interesting as it is, in my opinion the first half of the work, in which the author describes the customs in detail, is more acceptable than the views expressed in the second half, where the author attempts to explain the origin and meaning of the customs in question.

The above-stated opinion of the necessity of caution is intensified and the making of conclusions becomes much more difficult and complicated if we take into consideration the fact that similar customs and attitudes toward women to those of the Georgian Highlanders in the Caucasus are found also among many other peoples who are not related to the peoples of the Caucasus at all, and in many cases are total strangers, living in far removed parts of the world, under entirely different living conditions, such as the Eskimos and Indians of North America, in New Guiana, Polynesia, and among the various Paleo-Asiatic tribes of Siberia.

As an example, if we take only the customs connected with menstruation and childbirth as practiced by the various groups of the Eskimos of North America, we will notice their close similarity to the customs existing among the Georgian Highlanders of the Caucasus.

Like the Georgian Highlanders, the Eskimos regard woman at the times of menstruation and childbirth as unclean; she is avoided by the hunters, is obliged to live apart, and is subject to many regulations and taboos, as is shown by the investigations made by Professor Fr. Boas,[61] C. F. Hall,[62] E. W. Hawkes,[63] A. L. Kroeber,[64] T. Mathiassen,[65] L. M. Turner,[66] E. M. Weyer,[67] and others.

171 We shall not attempt a general explanation of the origin of the
184 customs regulating the sexual discrimination on a religious basis,^a
but will mention, in conclusion, that these customs are preserved

a [for detail see cat. 114, p90ff -- Analyst]

---

[61] Boas: 120, 260.
[62] Hall: 315.
[63] Hawkes: 134.
[64] Kroeber: 313.
[65] Mathiassen: 211.
[66] Turner: 208.
[67] Weyer: 372-7.

in the inaccessible mountain regions among the rough Highlanders, 171
and are lingering as feeble remnants of bygone customs in the 184
more civilized Lowlands. On the other hand, we notice that the boundaries of the regions in which these customs are practiced coincide precisely with the limits of that part of the Caucasus which was under Persian domination, and are absent entirely in the northwestern part of the country among the Circassians, who were never under Persian rule. This distinction should be noted in view of the fact that the Circassians had many customs and beliefs similar to those of the Georgian Highlanders.

CHAPTER VIII

Divorce

586 As we saw in the previous chapter dealing[a] with sex and religion, the birth of a child is regulated by the Georgian Highlanders with rigid rules prescribed by custom, which are not only painful and hard for a woman to execute, but which also endanger her very life. In spite of this, not only does bearing a child give a married woman an esteemed position in the social group, but all her happiness in the married state depends upon her maternal abilities. If a woman is sterile, neither her personal qualities nor her affection for her husband can preserve her married life, and the consequence is divorce.

The main cause for divorce among all groups of the Georgian Highlanders is sterility of the woman, but of equal importance is the case of women who bear only female children. There have been other motives leading to divorce. Thus the separation of a married couple could take place either by the mutual consent of husband and wife, or by the initiative of one party only, on the ground of personal dislike of the other or the breach of conjugal fidelity—adultery—which was regarded as a crime and resulted in the legal prosecution of the culprit. It should be noted that the right to initiate a divorce was in the hands of the husband and was denied to women.[1] If a woman took the first steps in a divorce proceeding, this was regarded as the criminal act of desertion and was prosecuted as such by the husband. There was always ground and a cause for the breaking up of families, and usually after children were born nothing but adultery on the part of the wife forced her to leave her husband.

In every case of divorce there were customary rules regulating the settlement of property between the separating parties.

The custom of divorcing one's wife for sterility, or when she bore only female children, was practiced by all groups of Georgian

[a] [see cat. 116, p90 ff.—Analyst]

---

[1] Kizanashvili: 131; Radde: d, 89.

Highlanders and was based on the dread of remaining childless, 586 especially without male descendants, which attitude, as we have said, had a religious, social, and economic foundation. We may even suppose that this custom was universally practiced by all groups of the Georgian nation, because we find it still in use among the Georgians of the Lowlands. Thus, for example, I knew one 595 such case which took place, not in the secluded mountain regions 586 of Khevsuria or Svanetia, but in one of the leading towns of Megrelia, in a harbor-town of the Black Sea which boasted such civilizing influences as high schools, libraries, motion picture theatres, etc. One of the citizens, Mr. A, was regarded by everyone as an honest and upright man. He lived for many years a happy conjugal life with his wife, but they had no children, so Mr. A took another wife who lived in a village about 40 miles away. By his second wife Mr. A had two children, a boy and a girl. They were of about school age when their mother became ill and died. After this Mr. A brought the children to his home in town to his first wife, who accepted the children as if they had been her own. This case was known to almost everyone in the town and was not regarded as something unnatural or deserving of condemnation.

The great significance of a son in the family makes it easy to understand why the custom prevailed of giving a Georgian Highlander full right, when his wife was sterile or if she bore only daughters, to "try his luck," as they say, and take another wife. "Unfruchtbarkeit des Weibes ist Grund zum Verlassen," writes Dr. G. Radde[3] in discussing the question of divorce among the Khevsurs. Thus, for example, a Pshav could in the same circumstances either divorce his first wife, or, if he was attached to her, allow her to stay in the house and with her consent take another wife. If the "luck" was favorable and he had sons by his second wife, they were regarded as legitimate heirs and possessed full inheritance rights. On their side, they were obliged to honor and love their father's first wife, as their own mother; that is, they were obliged to take care of her material needs and provide all necessary expences for her burial and funeral ceremonies.

---

[3] Radde: d, 89; also Zisserman: 221.

000 necessary expenses for her burial and funeral ceremonies. Al-
586 though if all the children were daughters and the husband was not
597 willing to divorce his first wife (who in her turn might not consent to his second marriage), there was a way out of the difficulty by using the custom of adoption, either of a grandson, the son of a married daughter, or even the latter's husband—the son-in-law—who, after adoption, was regarded as the legitimate son and heir of the family and was called *zedsidze*. This custom was practiced by all groups of the Georgian Highlanders with the exception of the Svans, who adopted only relatives, near or distant, and any stranger, even the husband of an only daughter, acquired no rights of inheritance or as a legitimate son.[3]

586 If the first wife did not wish to remain in the home of her
[595] husband together with the new wife, preferring to return to her parents, or if the husband did not wish to keep her, he had full right, according to custom, to send his first wife back to her parents. In doing this the husband was required to arrange the property settlement with his divorced wife according to customary rules which have a striking similarity to the laws of ancient Babylonia.[4] Thus, in the section of the Code of Hammurabi which deals with divorce we read in No. 138: "If a man has put away his bride who has not borne him children, he shall give her money as much as her bride-price, and shall pay her the marriage portion which she brought from her father's house, and shall put her away." In the same manner as the ancient Babylonians, when the Georgian Pshav[5] divorced his wife he was obliged to return her personal property to her (the *sathavno*) in full, but he was also required by custom to give her an additional compensation consisting of five cows or their equivalent—fifty rubles—called *samtsunebro,* meaning in the Georgian, "for rejecting." The *samtsunebro* payable by a Tush in similar circumstances consisted of a certain number of sheep.[6] The Khevsur's divorced wife[7] re-

---

[3] Kovalevsky: a, II, 4.

[4] Hobhouse: I, 179-80; also Harper: 49.

[5] Khizanashvili: 131; Eristov: 113; Kovalevsky: a, II, 90.

[6] Khakhanov: 2, 52-53.

[7] Kovalevsky: a, II, 115.

ceived indemnity from her husband in a certain number (heads) of 586 cows, in the same amount and way as the widow returning to her parents' home after her husband's death. For each year of her married life, the husband was required to give her one cow, excepting the first year which was not taken into account; so that for ten years of married life the divorced wife received nine cows; for five years, four cows, etc. The first year was not counted because most of thiis time was passed by the woman at the home of her parents, according to the customs of marriage.

Such cases of divorce as those just stated, where more than one 595 wife could be present in the family, are responsible for the erroneous opinions expressed by some investigators[8] who wrote about the practice of polygamy among the Georgian Highlanders. This error has been noticed by Dr. G. Radde, who brought this question into discussion in his German work, "Die Chewsuren und ihr Land."[9] and disputed the presence of polygamy among the Khevsurs.

Besides woman's sterility and the bearing of only female chil- 586 dren, the Georgian Highlanders permitted divorce on the ground of personal dislike between husband and wife, where the husband drove out his wife whom he did not like, or the wife deserted her spouse when she could not get along with him. When the husband put away his wife, he was required—according to the custom of the Khevsurs, Pshavs, and Tushes, as we have mentioned—to pay a fixed amount of indemnity, called *samtsunebro.* But when the divorce was initiated by a woman, her parents were required to pay the deserted husband eighty rubles or its equivalent in nature; otherwise she had no right to marry again. The payment of this indemnity, which was usually made with cows, sheep, domestic utensils, etc., made a woman legally free to venture upon a second marriage.

Among the Svans, when a married couple parted with the 587 mutual privilege of concluding a new marriage, such a divorce was 586 called *litsevra.* And when a husband was the initiator of the divorce and his wife was not guilty, he was requested to return the

---

[8] Eristov: 112-113.
[9] Radde: d, 98-90.

684 dowry of the woman and in addition to pay an indemnity to her
586 relatives, which usually was equal to half the amount of the blood price, called *tsor* by the Svans. This custom of the Svans is similar to the old law of King George V of Georgia, which is included in the Georgian Code of King Vakhtang VI, the law dealing with "Wife Desertion," which reads: "He who deserts his wife without cause, and it shall appear that though she was not at fault in anything yet he has separated from her innocent, shall pay half *wergild* according to her rank."[10] But in case a Svan woman deserted her husband of her own will, then her relatives paid him the same amount of indemnity, the half of *tsor,* and returned the bride-price (*nachvlash*) to him.[11]

The other motive of divorce among the Georgian Highlanders was the breach of conjugal fidelity—adultery committed by a woman, which was not only punishable with divorce, but was also regarded as a serious crime. In past times, the Tushes,[12] Pshavs,[13] and Khevsurs[14] mutilated the adulterous wife and in such a state sent her back to her parents. The mutilation consisted in ripping the woman's cheeks, or cutting off her nose, ears, and even her hands. Thus, for example, Dr. G. Radde tells of a woman being mutilated in such a way who was living in the village of Blo when he visited Khevsuria. "Untreue der Frau," writes Dr. Radde,[15] "wurde frueher durch Ohren—und Nasen—Abschneiden bestraft. Im Dorfe Blo kann man jetzt noch eine in dieser Weise verstummelte Frau sehen, auch das Wangenzerschneiden is ueblich fuer diese Suende."

But there was also a custom among the Khevsurs,[16] when the offended husband was unwilling to punish his guilty wife by mutilating her, he sent her home to her parents and prohibited her for a certain length of time from marrying again. This prohibition was called *ivstila.*

---

[10] Wardrop: 619.
[11] Kovalevsky: a, II, 50-51.
[12] Khakhanov: a, 52.
[13] Khizanashvili: 131.
[14] Radde: d, 90.
[15] Radde: *ibid.*
[16] Zisserman: 250.

The Svans did not follow the practice of the Khevsurs, Pshavs 684
and Tushes in punishing an adulterous wife by mutilation. On the 586
contrary, the husband was responsible to his wife's kinsmen for any abuse which she might suffer. The offended Svan husband had the right to send his guilty wife away and recover from her relatives the bride-price (*nachvlash*) paid by him, with an additional indemnity for his dishonor which was equal to half of the blood-price (*tsor*).[17]

---

[17] Kovalevsky: a, II, 37, 50.

CHAPTER IX

THE POSITION OF WOMAN

562 579 Discussing the cases of divorce among the Georgian Highlanders,[a] we saw that the right of separation was possessed by man and denied to woman, although in case of the woman's innocence, the husband was requested to arrange the property settlement, as decreed by custom. From the very first day of her life woman was unfavored by her parents, who always gave preference to the male child, and attached great importance to the son of the family, the circumstance of which was clearly manifested by the Svans in the custom of killing the female children and allowing the boys to live. From her childhood woman is loaded with hard work, in her parental home as well as after marriage in the home of her husband, where she has to perform, besides the household duties, the field work also. If she becomes a widow and has no children, she returns to the home of her parents, and the relatives of her deceased husband are obliged to give her her *sathavno* (personal capital), in full, and in addition as many cows as the years of her married life, not counting the first year. The procedure is the same as in the payment of indemnity in divorce motivated by the husband.[1] If the widow prefers, she is entitled to remain in the house of her dead husband, and his relatives must take care of her.[2] With the Svans she even takes a privileged position.[3] In a case where a widow has a son, she does not marry again. "It is regarded as a shame among the Khevsurs," writes Eristov,[4] "if a widow who has a son marries again." The same information is given also by Dr. Radde: "Eine Wittwe Kann, wenn sie einen sohn hat," writes he concerning the Khevsurs,[5] "nicht die zweite Ehe schliessen, es gilt das fuer schimpflich."

[a] [see p 116 ff, cat. 116 -- Analyst]

---

[1] See "Divorce."
[2] Zisserman: 251.
[3] Kovalevsky: a, II, 51.
[4] Eristov: 113.
[5] Radde: d, 90.

A woman's position in the family, and the prerogatives and duties which she has to perform, are not the same in the different groups of the Georgian Highlanders. As a general trait among them, we may mention woman's subordinate position to man; her husband is her superior, but not absolute master and lord. 562 [602]

The Pshav woman takes part in all kinds of work in the family life,[6] although there are some kinds of work done by men only. "In the Pshav family, where male members are present," writes Khizanashvili,[7] "the woman never cuts the grass, ploughs or takes an axe in hand." 462

With the Khevsurs, with the exception of the preparation of the land, tilling and ploughing, the work is accomplished by the women. "The women do most of the field work," writes Zisserman,[8] "man's part being the ploughing and mowing." The same information concerning the sexual division of labor among the Khevsurs is given by N. A. Busch also.[9] According to Eristov,[10] the mowing of grass also was executed by the women, so that only ploughing was left for men. It was also woman's obligation to bring straw and fire-wood from the far mountain slopes where it was stored. This was an especially hazardous undertaking in the winter, when all precipices and crevices were covered with deep snow. Dr. G. Radde describes this in his work dealing with the Khevsurs. "Den Maennern an Kraft stehen uebrigens die Weiber wenig nach," writes Dr. Radde.[11] "Sie sind es ja, die fast ausschliesslich arbeiten und alle Geschaefte liegen ihnen ob, mit Ausnahme des Ackerns un der Heumat. Im winter, wenn in hohen Schnee die Chewsurischen Doerfer gebettet da liegen, muss das Weib im Sommer an der Baumgrenze fertig gestellten Holzbuendel oft drei bis fier *Werst*[12] zum Hause schleppen und das auf den steilsten Kaum eingetretenen Gebirgsfaden."

With the Tushes, the woman is in a position similar to that of

---

[6] Pshavia: 252.
[7] Khizanashvili: 137.
[8] Zisserman: 212.
[9] Busch: 224.
[10] Eristov: 123.
[11] Radde: d, 73.
[12] *Werst*—the Russian measure of length—0.66 mile.

462 the Khevsur woman, and executes field work besides the housework.[13]

On the other hand, "among the Svans[14] woman is not oppressed, "she takes care only of the work about the home. In comparison[15] with the other mountaineers of the Caucasus, the Svans recognize in woman a considerable amount of independence. Among Balkars and Ossetes, all the work at home, as well as in the fields, is done by women; not so with the Svans, among whom woman enjoys much more leisure." Contrary to the above stated views are the views of the French investigator, R. Bernoville, in his description of the position of the Svan woman, which, however, does not correspond to reality. "La femme, traitée sans grand respect, je le crains," he writes,[16] "est cependant libre, et son attitude respire en général une certain indépendance d'allures. Seulement le Souane, fort paresseux de son natural, se décharge volontiers sur elle des travaux pénibles des champs." The women of the Svans take care of the housework, and also help the men in the field work.[17] The men plough, sow and harrow; the women mellow the soil. Hay is sown by the men and gathered by the women; harvesting is done by both sexes together.

562 Besides these differences in the manual work at home and in the fields, there are also other differences between man and woman in the communities of the Georgian Highlanders as expressed in possession of rights and the performance of duties. Woman is excluded from inheritance rights; she is totally ignored in some cases or counted as only half a man in the payment of blood money (the *wergild*) during a blood-feud. Her rights in divorce are limited; she is not admitted to a witness stand at judicial proceedings, is regarded as unclean, and is barred from entering the sanctuary of the community and from taking part in the religious festivals and holidays on an equal footing with men. In spite of all these restrictions of her actions and rights, she was never a "slave," or a "beast of burden," or a "chattel" of her husband's.

---

[13] Khakhanov: a, 52.
[14] Teptsov: a, 53.
[15] Kovalevsky: a, II, 49.
[16] Bernoville: 106.
[17] Dmitriev: 180.

The opinion expressed by many investigators and travelers who have visited the communities of the Georgian Highlanders, and deplore the degrading, humiliating position of the women. For example, R. D. Eristov writes about Khevsurs that "in general, they regard their women as slaves, and treat them roughly, without any feeling of kindness or attachment."[18] We think that such opinions do not coincide with reality. Many factors were in play in the process of creating the conditions of life and rights of the Georgian Highlander woman, among them the socio-psychological, political, economic, and historical being the most important, and we may as well add that any general statement concerning the question of the position of woman among the Georgian Highlanders or in any other primitive society "must be taken with caution," because "it should be noted that the treatment of woman is one thing, her legal status another, her opportunities for public activity still another, while the character and extent of her labors belong again to a distinct category."[19] So that in reality, as we see, the woman of the Georgian Highlanders possesses parallel with the above-enumerated limitations in her rights, also such privileges which are not only equal but much superior to those exercised by man. For example, we see that, although the position of the Khevsur woman was apparently degrading, she enjoyed prerogatives that were denied to man. Though she was not an heiress in the family, she had a right to have her own personal capital (*sathavno*), which was not permitted to man, whose personal property was very scanty. More than this, the woman could reach a position in the social group where she was not only equal to man, but even superior to him—that is, when she was regarded as a holy being. Although the woman is regarded as unclean from the religious viewpoint, at the same time the people believe that the deity (*Khati*) has a special esteem for women, or, to use the Khevsur expression, *Khats kalis khatri akvs,* meaning literally in English: "Khati woman's esteem has." Consequently she occupies different offices or diviners, such as: *mlotsavi, mkitkhavi, mesultane,* and even *kadagi,* when, according to the people's opinion, she is in direct contact with the spirits

---

[18] Eristov: 113.
[19] Lowie: a, 186; Hobhouse: 167-78.

562 and deities. Besides this, woman has full right to vote and take part equally with man in the family conferences, where she expresses her views, which are taken into consideration and many times accepted and followed. She mingles freely with men, takes part in their discussions, jokes, keeps herself without reserve, but at the same time does not lose her dignity.[20]

The personal rights of woman were protected by her kin, and for every mistreatment of his wife without any motive from her part, the Khevsur husband was responsible before her kinsfolk. "In Keinem Falle," writes Merzbacher[21] concerning this matter, "aber ist dem Manne gestatted, seine Frau schlecht zu behandeln. Hierfuer ist er der ganzem Gemeinde verantwortlich."

Concerning the Tush women, they are more reserved than their Khevsur and Pshav sisters. "Every honest woman is expected to be a good house-keeper, modest and shy," writes A. L. Zisserman about the Tush woman.[22] The Tush woman is characterized in the same way by Professor A. Khakhanov. "Woman among the Tushes is prominent with her shy and modest character," he writes.[23] "She hides herself from an unexpected guest, talks only with her relatives and intimate acquaintances, and in general the less free she is in her behaviour, the higher her personal qualities are rated." 562 101 This reserved position of woman among the Tushes in comparison with that of the other Georgian Highlanders may be explained through two main causes: economic and historico-political. The occupation of the people is principally pastoral; they have large flocks of sheep and most of the time the men are absent from their homes, so that the women are obliged to perform, besides the work about the house, the field work also. The second cause may be ascribed to the geographical position of the country. Tushetia adjoins the rich Georgian province of Kakhetia, and is nearer and more accessible to the political and cultural center (Tiflis). Consequently, besides many other influences, there was the Islamic influence affecting the status of

---

[20] Gurko-Kriajin: 281.
[21] Merzbacher: II, 70.
[22] Zisserman: 254.
[23] Khakhanov: a, 52.

woman, and placing her, among the Tushes, in a more reserved 562 101
position than among the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Svans.

The personal and social rights of woman among the Svans were much higher than among other Georgian Highlanders. The Svan 562
woman is not shy and reserved. Mr. Bakradze[24] relates that he "was delighted with the ease and freedom of their manners," and he adds: "They entered into conversation with me, joked, waited upon me, and flirted." There is no ground to regard the Svan woman as devoid of all rights.[25] Subordinated to her husband, she enjoys at the same time considerable privileges in the matter of her personal and property rights. And as for her social position, it should be noted that the Svans, more than any other peoples of the Caucasus, allow their women to take the witness stand and even to be mediators during judicial proceedings. The women of Svanetia often take that high stand in the social life which was given to women among the ancient Germans, who called women *Friedenwebe* (peace-web), meaning peace-making, because of their ability to bring about peace among the hostile tribes. Women[26] 562
often stopped the blood-feuds and killings between inimical parties. 578
This conciliatory role of woman was especially prominent among the Khevsurs and Tushes, who had great respect for the woman's head-dress, the shawl, called *mandili,* which is worn only by married women.

Mandili has an important meaning in the eyes of the mountaineers,[27] it is regarded among the Tushes as inviodable and even as a sacred object. More than once the *mandili* put an end to quarrels and bloody encounters between hostile families. It is sufficient for a woman to take off her *mandili* and put it before the feet of an enraged mountaineer, for he is then obliged to put his brandishing dagger in the scabbard at once, and retire. Describing this custom among the same Tushes, Zisserman[28] regards it as "remarkable, chivalrous respect of woman." The same custom of respecting woman's *mandili* was and is observed also among

---

[24] Bakradze: 45.
[25] Kovalevsky: a, II, 51-2.
[26] Stoianov: 435.
[27] Khakhanov: a, 52.
[28] Zisserman: 252.

562 the Khevsurs.[29] In order to stop the fighting men from bloodshed 578 the Khevsur women kneel between them, and with the words "Lords! Heroes!, so we ask you!" they throw their *mandili* on the ground before the feet of the men, who immediately cease the brawl. Many investigators regard this custom as a survival of the formerly-existing matriarchate among the Khevsurs. All attempts to find out from the Khevsurs the meaning of this custom are futile.[30] On the question as to why they are obliged to do this, "the Khevsurs can not answer or give any explanation."

601 Not only in customs, but even in the current expressions of 562 the Georgian language, preference is given to woman before man. When speaking about a male and female together, the Georgian gives the female the first place always. For example, one says "mother and father" (*ded-mama*)—from the words, *deda* (mother) and *mama* (father)—but one never says "father and mother." The Georgian says *da-dzma* (*da*—sister; *dzma*—brother), but not "brother and sister"; also, female and male (*kal—vaji; kali,* female; *vaji,* male), but not "male and female"; wife and husband (*tsol-kmari—tsoli*—wife; *kmari*—husband), but never "husband and wife."

533 In every-day speech, in poetry, in music and song, and even in 562 dancing, the Georgian glorifies the beauty and attributes of the feminine sex. In every gathering, on all occasions, during work or idleness, in all corners of the country, even in the secluded glacier regions, the Georgians sing; and among their songs of warfare and courage there are always the songs of passionate love and the praise of woman's beauty. The woman, on the other hand, attained her esteemed position not only by her beauty, but also by her personal qualities which often gave her the leading role in the destiny of the nation and the country. The personality of the brilliant Queen Tamar of the Georgians may be mentioned as an example. She was called by her people the "King," "King Tamar"—*Tamar-mepe* (*mepe*—king), for her great achievements and personal abilities. The time of her reign (1184-1212) represents the golden age of Georgian history. In every corner

---

[29] Eristov: 127.
[30] Gurko-Kriajin: 272.

of Georgia, among every ethnic group—in the secluded glacier 533 regions of the rough Highlanders as well as among the easy-going 562 and cultured Lowlanders—the people sing national songs praising "King" Thamar—(*Thamar-mepe*) and her glory, which was the glory of Georgia. For example, D. W. Freshfield[31] relates of his Svan guides that they "chanted a ballad with a refrain of 'Thamara, Thamara,' in honour of their queen." And in the person of every Georgian mother, the country had its most zealous defenders of its sovereignty, its language and culture.

---

[31] Freshfield: II, 12.

CHAPTER X

PROPERTY

1. The Individual Rights of Ownership and Inheritance—

428 In the previous chapters dealing with the position of woman among the Georgian Highlanders, we have discussed the privilege, among others, of the right of woman to possess individual property.[a]

Reviewing the individual rights of property and inheritance in a social group of Georgian Highlanders, we notice at once the existence of sexual discrimination. Property and inheritance rights are not the same for the two sexes. The position of woman is very different from that of man in this respect. Woman had a right to have personal property (*sathavno*), which in time past was denied to man, while he in turn possessed rights of inheritance which were not shared by women.

In a case when a family was divided, the whole property was divided among the male members. The women were exempt from this division, except that the food reserve was distributed equally to all members, regardless of sex. A special provision was made for a woman expecting a child; she received, besides her own share, a portion for her future child.[1] Property was not divided equally among all male members of the family. If the family division took place during the lifetime of the father, he received, besides his own share, an extra portion for his funeral expenses, called *samarkh*, as did all other elderly members of the family, who had full freedom in the choice of a member with whom they would live. However, among the Khevsurs,[2] the father divided all his property among his sons, without leaving anything for himself, and lived with his sons in turn. If the family was a joint family, its head-man, called *mama-katsi* by the Pshavs, and

[a] [see cf. 11c, p. 122--Analyst]

---

[1] Kovalevsky: II, 114.

[2] Zisserman: 213, 227.

makhvshi by the Svans, had no privileges beyond that of any other 428
male member of the group. He shared equally with the others.

There was an exception made in the division of property in the case of an older son, who because of his seniority received an extra portion, which consisted among the Khevsurs and Tushes, of a horse and a sword, and among the Pshavs, of five cows. With the Svans, the eldest son usually received the best of the domestic animals owned by the family, whether cow, horse or ox. In some Svan communities this extra portion consisted of a piece of arable land, which should be no larger than that which could be tilled by one pair of oxen during one day, or even half a day, so that this portion was usually equal to a *naljom.*[3] In Svanetia the right to the portion of seniority was only given to cover their marriage expenses.

Besides the privilege of seniority in the division of property, there was also a special additional portion given to unmarried sons to cover their marriage expenses.

In case a son died before receiving his portion, it went to his male descendants if he were married, and there was also a special compensation for his widow. She received her *sathavno* (personal capital), and a number of cows in proportion to the number of years she had been married. This principle is the same as that applied to the payment of indemnity to divorced wives.[4] However, if a widow preferred to remain at the home of her deceased husband, she received from his relatives the necessary cost of living. If the deceased was a single man, his portion was added to the family property and accordingly divided among the male members.

Adopted members of a family acquired no inheritance rights 597
except in the case of an adoptive son-in-law (*zedsidze*) among 428
the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes. Among the Svans, unlike the other Georgians, the *zedsidze* is not an inheritor. This custom of allowing the son-in-law to inherit was universal in Georgia

---

[3] Unit of measurement of arable land in Svanetia.

[4] See "Divorce" and "Position of Woman."

597 in times past, and still is preserved, with local variations. Con-
428 cerning the *zedsidze*, it should be noted that he was not esteemed very much by the relatives of his foster parents, who saw in him the loss of their individual share in the inheritance. And it often happened that, after living in the family of his parents-in-law as a son and sharing their labor and hardships, the *zedsidze* was driven out without any recompense. In view of this, it is not strange that the *zedsidze* should take the precaution beforehand of having his father-in-law's property transferred legally to himself, in order to avoid these unfortunate occurrences.

429 In the event the head of a family died while his children were under age, the Khevsurs entrusted the management of their property to their mother's brother.

Illegitimate children among the Khevsurs had no inheritance rights. Among the Pshavs, if a man abandoned his first wife because of her sterility and took a second, the children of the latter enjoyed full inheritance rights because they were regarded as legitimate.[5] The Svans instantly killed their illegitimate children,
[848] but in case they were left alive, they were devoid of any inheritance
rights from the paternal as well as the maternal side.[6]

421 Individual property rights of males among the Georgian Highlanders before the division of the family were very small, and in times past, were almost non-existent, except for such everyday necessities as clothing and arms; but even these things were under the control and supervision of the head-man of the group (the *mama-katsi*), when the "joint family" represented the social unit. The property of the family represented the joint ownership of all its members. The sale of the family property could take place only with the consent of all members of the family, and it had a preferential character. Among the buyers, the preference was given to the persons related to the family.

428 Every male member, as mentioned before, inherited a share of the family property, and at the same time he was responsible for the payment of a portion of the family debts. The refusal of his inheritance rights did not relieve him of this obligation. All male

---

[5] See "Divorce."

[6] Kovalevsky: a, II, 11.

members of the family were held responsible for debts incurred by 428
the family before its division. The women members, however, were exempt from this obligation.

Inheritance and individual property rights of women in the 428
social group of the Georgian Highlanders were entirely different 422
from those of men. As mentioned before, women received no part of the family property in its division. Nevertheless, they were not left entirely helpless. Women were allowed to possess their own capital, consisting of money, household utensils, domestic animals, etc.

After performing her household duties and field work, a woman's time was her own. In her leisure she was free to do whatever she wished for her own benefit, and this time was usually employed in enlarging her personal capital (*satavno*). This *satavno* is accumulated gradually, its amount depending upon the woman's industry and ability. Women begin to work for their *satavno* in early childhood. Thus, for example, it was no rarity to meet young girls of not more than eight years old who already had their *satavno*. A woman's personal capital accumulated by her work is greatly enlarged at the time of her marriage by many presents which she receives at the wedding ceremony from her own and her husband's relatives. This custom of presenting gifts to the bride forms one of the principal parts of the wedding ceremony among the Georgians, and has an official and public character. Every gift and donor are made known to the public by a specially appointed person who conducts the ceremony. He is called *mkepari*, meaning "barker," as we have already mentioned in the chapter dealing with marriage customs. To these wedding presents is usually added a portion of the bride's mother's *satavno*, and if the bride is an only daughter she may inherit the full amount of her mother's capital.

The woman's capital is at her personal disposal, and no member of her family, not even her husband, has a right to touch it. She may use it as she desires. And her capital may not be used to pay any debts or obligations of the family.

---

[7] Machabeli: V.

422 The individual property rights of Georgian women are strikingly similar to the property rights of women in Egypt, where the woman's property "remains generally at her disposal, and she retains in contracts the right to leave her husband and to keep her property together with the bride gift."[8]

422 428 Among the Svans,[9] the wife is the sole proprietor of her dowry and without her consent no part of it can be alienated. If arable land forms a part of the dowry, the husband has a right to make use of it only with the permission of his wife. He is nothing more than a caretaker of her property, and not her master and lord.

The property of a woman is inherited by her children. If it is not large, the only inheritor is her daughter; in the contrary case it is divided among all her children, male and female. The woman may lend her capital to a stranger at interest, and to members of her family as well. They are obliged to return it to her. If a woman dies childless, her property belongs to her parents; if they refuse to accept it, it goes to her husband.

586 587 In case of a divorce, if it is not the result of adultery, she receives her *sathavno* in full, which represents her life's security. She receives also an additional compensation.[10] The widow had full right to stay in the home of her deceased husband, or could return to her parental home, in which case she received her *sathavno* in full from the relatives of her dead husband.

Interesting facts concerning the property rights of the Georgian woman are given by E. Gabasvili[11] in an article printed in the Georgian journal, "Iveria."

2. *Group Ownership—*

421 After the discussion of individual property rights of the Georgian Highlanders, we shall review the question of group ownership. We find it expressed in the communal ownership of pasture grounds and forests and religious property.

---

[8] Hobhouse: I, 183.
[9] Kovalevsky: a, II, 50.
[10] See "Divorce."
[11] Gabashvili.

It is interesting to note the information given by Professor 421
Kovalevsky, which exposes the group ownership of the Pshavs.[12] 471
He relates that during his visit to the country he found an interesting combination of property rights of a nation, of the community, and of the separate family. For example, the forest was in common possession of the whole Pshav nation, the pasture ground was the property of communities which composed the nation, and the arable land was in the hands of each family, private or joint; and as there seldom was a division of the family, the property did not change hands but remained in the same family. Contrary to the Pshavs, division of the family was a general occurrence with the Khevsurs, and had as a consequence the division of property and the poverty of the people. At once, after his [591]
marriage, every Khevsur usually separates from his father and brothers and begins life for himself.[13] In contrast to this, the wealth of the Pshavs, who are not partisans of family division, was much greater than that of their neighbors. Among the Pshavs and Tushes were even such rich persons who possessed from 40,000 to 50,000 rubles, which they usually buried in the ground. As for the Khevsurs, they possess few cattle and are generally very poor.[14] Their property is very limited. A family is considered wealthy which owns as many as fourteen or fifteen cows, four or five oxen, two or three horses, and a mule. Their principal wealth is in arms, which are highly valued, and in copper vessels; money is very scarce.[15]

The government of the Georgian kingdom opposed the division 596
of the family and favored its preservation, for it regarded the 421
joint ownership of families as beneficial to the members of the 471
families themselves as well as to the whole kingdom whose sub- 476
jects they were. Thus, in the Georgian Code of King Vakhtang VI[16] we find passages encouraging the preservation of joint families and discouraging the partition and breaking up of family groups. The economic profit resulting from such organizations

---

[12] Kovalevsky: a, II, 84.
[13] Eristov: 111.
[14] Eristov: 124.
[15] Zisserman: 213.
[16] Vakhtang's Code.

576 is manifest, even at the present time, in the rural life of eastern
421 Georgia, where the primitive methods of tillage require five or
471 six, or even more, pairs of oxen and many workmen. Instead of
476 the joint family, which has now disappeared, economic groups are formed for the joint execution of field work, in which the prerogatives and duties of every participant are clearly defined.

As we mentioned in the beginning, group ownership among the Georgian Highlanders is manifested in the ownership of pasture ground, forests, and church property.

421 Pasture grounds are owned by every community jointly, and their boundaries are clearly defined and fixed. The Pshavs, who possess large flocks of sheep, amounting among wealthy men to as many as ten thousand head of animals,[17] hire the pasture ground from the Khevsurs and in other suitable places. Every member of the community in Pshavia,[18] had a right to use, after harvest, the arable land as pasture for his herds in the territory of the whole community. The pasture grounds of the Tushes represented a joint property of communities.[19]

471 The forests are situated in the territory of the people, as, for
421 example, the forest on the banks of the River Alazani in Tushetia,
425 called *otkhi thvali* (meaning "four eyes"). This forest was bought with the money of all Pshav communities, and represented the national property.[20] Upon the ownership of the forest depended the method of acquiring the arable land by the so-called *akho* (ownership by seizure), which allowed every member of the community to clear the land and cultivate it for his own benefit, without asking special permission from anybody for this action, and this portion of cleared land was regarded as his own property as long as he cultivated it. However, with the introduction of Russian rule in the Caucasus, a great portion of the forest was claimed for the Crown, and proclaimed as the property of the Imperial Government. The consequence of this was that it put an end to the ancient method of acquiring landed property by

---

[17] Zisserman: 233.
[18] Machabeli: V, 386.
[19] Khakhanov: a, 43.
[20] *Ibid.*

seizure (*akho*). New clearings were forbidden by the government 471 and, if made, were done so only by special permission of the 421 425 authorities.

Most forests were the property of the Church. Almost 794 every investigator or mere traveler who has visited the country 471 of the Georgian Highlanders describes the rich virgin forests belonging 421 to the Church. We have already mentioned such forests in Svanetia,[21] as described by Bartolomei[22] and Bakradze.[23] The same situation was found among the Khevsurs. The forests representing Church property are called by the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes, *sakhato* forests, and they are usually situated around the sanctuaries or not far from them. Such forests are very easily recognized by their large old trees. No one is permitted to approach these trees or to break off their branches.

Besides the forests, the Church property consists of arable land, vineyards, flocks of sheep, and church utensils and vessels.

All members of every community are members of the local sanctuary, the arable land, and pasture grounds (*sakhato mitsebi,* of property." The property of the sanctuary (*khati*) is called *sakhato,* and consists of different buildings representing the sanctuary, the arable land, and pasture grounds (*sakhato mitsebi,* meaning "church lands"). Besides the above-mentioned property [422] of the *khati,* there are also silver and copper vessels and utensils necessary in the brewing of beer, called *ludi,* and for church festivals. All the property of the *khati* is regarded as common property of all the *mogantzuri.* The supervision and care of the church property is entrusted to the attendants of the sanctuary—*dekanozi, khutsi, dasturi,* and others.

Almost every sanctuary in Khevsuria and Pshavia possessed 794 large copper pots, valued at from one hundred to two hundred 422 rubles, and used for brewing beer from barley.[24] Some sanctu- 778 aries possessed silver vessels of different form and size, with the names of the donors inscribed on them, and worth from one to

---

[21] See Chapter III.
[22] Bartolomei: 151-3.
[23] Bakradze: 51.
[24] Eristov: 99.

794 422 778 twenty thousand rubles. Dr. Radde (1878) relates that he found silver vessels in a sanctuary in Khevsuria valued at fifteen hundred rubles. "Diese gefaesse bilden den hauptsaechlichsten Reichtum des heidnischen Tempels. Im vorliegenden Falle konnte ich sie wohl auf einen Worth von 1500 Rubel schaetzen."[25] Concerning the Pshav sanctuary *Lashris jvari,* Klaproth writes (1808):[26] "It is said to contain many golden images of saints, crosses and church utensils, for to this place the Pshavs and Tushes bring all the gold and silver that fall into their hands." All this wealth is in the custody of the *dekanozi,* who preserve them in well-hidden pits. About the same sanctuary Prince Vakhusht writes (1789):[27] "In Pshavia is a church erected by Kink Lasha, where there are preserved a great number of gold and silver icons (holy images), crosses, vessels and books. They call this church *Lashris-jvari,* and hold it in great veneration. There is not one Pshav or Khevsur who will keep gold and silver for himself; he has no right to it, but must present it to the church of *Lashris-jvari.*"

421 794 471 [784] Besides the above-named vessels and utensils, the sanctuaries also possessed vineyards,[28] which were situated in the Georgian province of Kakhethi, famous for its excellent varieties of wine. The wine from these vineyards, called *kulukhi,* is used for the church festivals, where enormous quantities of beer and wine are consumed by the thirsty throats of the mountaineers. These drinking orgies always end in fighting and brawling.

The purchase of a vineyard or other necessary properties for the sanctuary was made in the following manner: the *khevis-beri* of one of the sanctuaries called the people together on the meeting grounds and announced his wish to them concerning the purchase of a vineyard or some other property for the sanctuary, and asked them to make the assessments of money among themselves for this purpose. The necessary funds were contributed promptly and willingly by the community and given to *khevis-beri,* who arranged the purchase.

---

[25] Radde: c, 259.
[26] Klaproth: a, 396.
[27] Vakhusht: 109-10.
[28] Zisserman: 233; Eristov: 99, 108.

The barley for the preparation of the beer is brought by all 421
members of the community where the sanctuary is situated, and 794
is kept in stock in a special building of the sanctuary called *begeli.* 471
And for numerous sacrifices brought during Church festivals, the sanctuary of *Thamar-mepe* even possesses a large flock of sheep, the shepherds of whom are appointed from the members of the congregation, for a period of one year, and are subject to many taboos and regulations, which they must obey during that period.

Any violation of group or private property is regarded as a [685]
crime, and in its prosecution the principal matter is the restitution of material damage.

CHAPTER XI

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

671 Like the other ethnic groups of the Caucasus, the Georgian mountaineers prosecuted, first of all in every crime, the material damage which had caused injury to their property. There was no discrimination made between voluntary and involuntary offenses, and an unsuccessful attempt to commit a crime went unpunished. No man among the Pshavs,[1] culpable in a murder committed either purposely or involuntarily, could be safe from blood-vengeance by the relatives of the man he killed. The Khevsurs, Tushes and Svans held the same views. More than that, the Svans customarily regard a person as guilty of a crime if the damage was done, even without his knowledge, by an object owned by him. This custom explains the existence of another—that of the victim's kinsmen taking from the murderer the weapon with which he committed the crime. This custom may explain the manner in which Prince Puta Dadiani was killed in Svanetia by the inhabitants; they took a gun belonging to the church and killed the Prince from the church window. This was done because they believed that the kinsmen of the murdered prince would have to deal, in avenging the crime, with the church, which was the proprietor of the gun. The gun and its proprietor, the church, in the opinion of the people, were responsible for the crime. This belief was found only in Free Svanetia, and did not exist in Princely Svanetia.

682 In Free Svanetia, involuntary murder or wounding, as a general rule, always has as a consequence the payment of the *wergild* (*tsor*). However, the same offense was not prosecuted in Princely Svanetia. Attempts to commit a crime were always left unprosecuted in Svanetia.[2]

---

[1] Zisserman: 249.
[2] Kovalevsky: a, II, 32.

The almost complete independence of the communities and their failure to join together in one political unit were the unfavorable conditions which hindered the development of permanent courts of justice.

Differences between the members of a community were regulated by arbitration. A plan of settlement was prepared by a socially chosen mediator, called *shuakatsi*, meaning "middle man," from the Georgian words *shua*—middle, and *katsi*—man. The *shuakatsi* had the full confidence of both parties. Among the Svans, the mediators were called *morvar*. They themselves determined the methods for disclosing the crime, following the custom of ancient times. In their judicial procedure, the mediators referred to witnesses, and in cases difficult to decide, they left the matter to God's judgment—the ordeal.

In all their disputes[3] the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes choose judges, preferably old men, who appoint the place and time. Besides the judges, the accused and accuser come, and some villagers. The plaintiff kneels before the judges, takes off his hat, and pronounces the following words: "God help Georgia, the upright Judge and plaintiff, punish the partial judge, and the one who makes false accusations, thou answer for me. . . ." Then he relates his complaint. After this comes the defendant, who performs the same act as did the plaintiff. After hearing both sides of the parties, the judges discuss the facts given, make their decision and announce it to both parties. Such a decision is regarded as sacred and irrevocable and must be accepted by both parties.

The court of justice for the regulation of all delicts, among the Svans, is called *morvakh*, and judges specially appointed mediators, called *morvar*. Every sort of crime is settled by the mediators appointed by each party. The number of mediators depends upon the character of the crime itself, six or seven in case of murder, two or three in minor cases. The mediators reach a decision by a majority of votes. If the number of mediators is even, then they appoint one as a sort of leader, who has two votes, so that

---

[3] Eristov: 131-32.

692 if the mediators' votes should be tied, the extra vote will determine the decision of the case.[4] I was present at, and even chosen as a mediator in two cases during my visit to some of the villages of Megrelia." The mediators are called, in Svanetia, *morvar*. Before the beginning of the session the mediators are obliged to take an oath that they will act and make the decision as though the case were their own. One of the near relatives of the plaintiff addresses them, expressing his wish that they will be just and impartial in their decision. After this, the judges promise to conduct the case as though it were their own trial. Following this procedure, the judges invite both the accused and the accuser to take an oath that they will abide by the decision of the court.

[565] It is interesting to note that the higher the social position of the man, in Svanetia, the fewer mediators he appointed for himself. For every two mediators appointed by one peasant, the family of the nobleman opposing him, called *aznauri*, appointed only one mediator.

681 Manslaughter, abduction of married women, adultery, and theft (cattle stealing, among the Tushes) involved blood-feud as a consequence. Offenses other than these were regarded as minor delicts, for which the penalty was the material restitution and the payment of a certain fixed fine. Besides blood-feud and the payment of the *wergild*, there were other punishments for crime among the Georgian Highlanders, such as exclusion from the social group, stoning, and social boycott. Stoning of a criminal was practiced by the Tushes, but not in a literal form; the persons threw stones when passing a certain place on the cross-roads, where there was a heap of stones, mentioning the name of the criminal. "During my travels not far from the village of Duisi,"[5] writes Professor Khakhanov,[6] "I noticed a large heap of stones carefully placed together. The meaning was explained to me. A Kist had had incestuous relations with his wife's sister; for this crime the village decided to punish him severely. It was decided that the culprit must pay an indemnity of one hundred and sixty rubles

---

[4] Kovalevsky: a, II, 22.

[5] In Tushetia.

[6] Khakhanov: a, 54.

[see cat 116, p 141-142 -- Analyst]

to his father-in-law; that he must be divorced from his wife; and 681
that he himself should be stoned. The man was stoned, not in person, but by calling his name at the cross-roads, where every passerby cursed the wrongdoer and left a stone, as though he had thrown it at the criminal." Concerning boycott, if we take into consideration the structure of the social organizations among the people and the limited individual rights of every member, it is not difficult to understand that exclusion from society was a very severe penalty, leaving a man without any protection or help.

Although the consequence of murder was blood-feud, man- 682
slaughter committed within the group by one of its members did 628
not have blood-feud as a result, as in cases of parricide and fratricide. Among the Svans the penalty for parricide was social ostracism. No one spoke to the culprit; he lived in his own social group, neglected and mistrusted by everyone. Besides this, he was obliged to wear a necklace of stones about his neck, called *ska,* in full view, which he had no right to take off. However, any murder committed by a person of another community was prosecuted with blood-feud.

1. Blood-Feud

The principal factor in the criminal law of the Georgian mountaineers was the blood vengeance. Its origin and very existence were dependent upon the organization of the social life and beliefs of the people.

It was regarded as accomplished and brought to the logical end when the murderer or one of his kinsmen was killed, when the law of "blood for blood," or to use the Georgian expression, *katsi-katsi* (meaning "man for man"), was fulfilled.

In the execution of all proceedings of blood-feuds, there was a marked group solidarity; every member of the group taking an active part in the prosecution was also responsible with his own life for his kinsman.

Women, children, and very old men were exempt from the blood-feud.[7]

---

[7] Gurko-Kriajin: 275

628 692 Besides the killing of the murderer or his kinsman, there was another way out of the situation; that was the payment of the fixed amount of the indemnity (the *wergild*).

Besides manslaughter—which was one of the main motives for blood-feud—adultery, abduction of married women, and cattle-stealing (among the Tushes) led to the same consequence.

The details in the technique of the blood-vengeance, as well as the amount of the *wergild*, were not exactly the same among the different groups of Georgian mountaineers. There were local variations and differences in details. But the principal foundation of the institution was the same with all: the shed blood claimed the blood of the murderer; it was "crying" for vengeance; blood should be washed by blood, man for man, *katsi-katsi*.

The prosecution and punishment of murder during the blood-feud is so important that the kin of the slain man will risk their own lives in order to fulfill the (law) justice of feud—to avenge the blood—to kill the culprit. There was the following occurrence in Svanetia: a Svan was sentenced for murder and sent to prison in Siberia, where he was forced to perform penal work. The kin of the slain man followed him to Siberia in order to accomplish their duty—to avenge the death of his kin, by killing the offender.

When a man was killed by a Khevsur,[9] his relatives and members of his family at once destroyed and burned down the property of the murderer. By this time the murderer and his near relatives were usually in flight, seeking refuge in some distant community, where they received shelter and protection, and were called in the Georgian *khizani* or *amanathi*, meaning "refugees."

The murderer stayed in exile as *khizani* for three years, and during this time he was obliged to send to the family of his victim one sheep every month. Only at the end of the fourth year he sent to them negotiators, asking them to accept the payment for blood—the *wergild*. If his offer was accepted, he was obliged to pay to the family of the murdered man two hundred and eighty sheep, or the equivalent—seventy cows—and then only he had the

---

[8] Kovalevsky: a, II, 39.

[9] Eristov: 130.

right to return to his village, where he had to pay in addition, to 628 the maternal uncle of the slain man, the fixed fine of two hundred 682 and twenty sheep. According to Zisserman,[10] the murderer had to pay a *wergild* of sixty cows and fifteen rams. In a case when after the payment of the *wergild* the murderer was killed, the fine for his life was not the full amount of the blood-money, but consisted only of one hundred and twenty sheep, and was called *saukan-momkudaro,* meaning, "for the return death."

In Khevsuria the maternal uncle had the leading role in the [602] execution of all proceedings of blood-vengeance,[11]* and the maternal uncle, in time past, received in payment an indemnity equal in amount to the sum given by the murderer to the whole community of the victim.

The Pshavs differ from the Khevsurs in that they do not burn the property of the murderer. The community of the murderer, in Pshavia, was obliged to send to the community of the murdered man an indemnity consisting of three oxen, three sheep and a sabre, called *saupatio,* meaning "for dishonor." Besides this, the relatives of the victim had the right to demand the arms of their choice found in the possession of the members of the family of the culprit; this custom was known as *almania.*

The murderer and his relatives avoided meeting the relatives of the victim. If it did happen that the murderer or any of his relatives met with their enemies—for example, at a time when leading their flocks—they abandoned their flocks and fled. The relatives of the murdered man had the right to take one quarter of the number of the flock.

The lives of the murderer and his relatives were, then, only out of danger when the *wergild* was paid.

2. WERGILD

The payment of indemnity for a murder—the so-called blood-money—formed among the Georgian Highlanders the basis for the measurement and determination of the amount payable for

---

* [see cat 116, pp. 143-145 -- Analyst]

[10] Zisserman: 225.
[11] Kovalevsky:

682 all kinds of crimes committed. The amount of blood-money required from the offender differed according to sex, age, social status, physical condition, and religion of the slain person. In the payment of the *wergild* the culprit was assisted by his relatives, who were also co-jurors when an oath was taken.

The amount of the *wergild* for the life of a man was higher that that for a woman. Among the Tushes, the murderer of a woman was required to pay an indemnity of thirty cows, which was exactly half the blood-money required for a man's life.[12]

Children and old people were exempt from blood vengeance.

525 In communities where the social life shows stratification, the
682 *wergild* differed according to the social standing of the offender. In Free Svanetia[13] the *wergild* for the murder of a nobleman was equal to the amount of two bloods.

The same situation prevailed in the whole Georgian Kingdom in times past. "Murder was called blood," Prince Vakhusht writes.[14] "When a man had killed someone equal to himself socially, he was obliged to pay for the blood with silver or cattle, according to the social status of the victim, and the King might arrest, punish, and even kill him. If a man of high social standing killed a man of a lower class, he was obliged to pay for the blood; but if a man of a lower class killed a man of a higher class, he had to pay for the blood and was also deprived of his property for a few years."

The *wergild* for a pregnant woman was higher than that for a woman in normal physical condition.

[illegible] There was also religious discrimination in the payment of the fine for the blood. The *wergild* for the murder of a Christian was higher than that for a Mohammedan. Among the Tushes, the blood-money for killing a Christian consisted of sixty cows, and for a Mohammedan only half that number.

436 The payments[2] were made, not with money, but with various
682 goods available in the community: cows, horses, sheep, copper pots, arms, etc. This is not difficult to comprehend if we take into

---

[12] Khakhanov: a, 53. [2] [i.e., of wergild; see pp145-146 -- Analyst]

[13] Besnoville: 106.

[14] Vakhusht: 6.

consideration the natural economy of the social life in the com- 436
munities and the prevailing system of exchange—barter. Among 612
all things used for this purpose, as in currency, there was one which was accepted as the standard of value, with a scale of its valuation in other more common and cheaper things. This standard of value was not the same with the different groups of Georgian Highlanders, nor with the various peoples of the Caucasus; it represented the most valuable object of the people in question, so that with the Circassians it consisted of arms, which were the most cherished and richly ornamented family heirlooms, but payment was made usually with horses or slaves. For the Ossetes the standard of value was the cow; for the Svans it was a certain portion of arable land, called *ts'khadish;* this standard was used because of the scarcity of land suitable for cultivation in their country. Among the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes, the standard of value consisted of cows, and in former times, according to Prince Vakhusht,[15] in the whole Kingdom of Georgia the "blood was paid with silver or cattle."

Among the Khevsurs there were two different ways of paying the *wergild*. The full amount could be paid either with cows, or paid half with cows and half with money. In the latter case this manner of payment was called *khelit*. The value of an indemnity was fixed at a number of cows, but payment could be made with sheep, arms, horses, copper vessels, etc., with a fixed valuation of each object. "As the payment is not always made with money," writes R. D. Eristov[16] concerning the Khevsurs, "but with cattle, arms, agricultural products and household utensils, everything mentioned, therefore, has one fixed standard of value: a stallion would be equal to seven cows; a mare to four cows; an ox to seven sheep; a cow, four sheep or five rubles; a sheep, one ruble and twenty kopeks; a goat, eighty kopeks; a kid, forty kopeks; arable land yielding one *dseri*, representing the amount of sixty sheaves and giving not less than one *koda* of wheat, is equal to five cows." The valuation of the *wergild* and the technique of its payment as practiced among the Khevsurs in the

---

[15] Vakhusht: 6.
[16] Eristov: 133.

436 time past are also described by Zisserman.[17] The penalty affixed
682 by the judges, according to his information, consisted always in the exaction from the culprit of a certain sum, depending upon the crime committed. Owing to the almost total absence of money, the fine is paid with cattle, which has once and forever a fixed price, as follows: a mare is equal to twenty rubles; a cow, five rubles; a ham, two rubles; a sheep, one ruble and forty kopeks. Every object has its valuation not in money but in domestic animals; for example, a gun costs twenty cows or one hundred rubles; a horse costs ten cows; two rams and one sheep, fifty-five rubles and forty kopeks. Again, if the indemnity for a stolen object is to be paid with cows, the accused has a right to pay—instead of cows or rams—arms, copper vessels, hides, or corn. Every one of the above-mentioned objects has its valuation. For example, suppose a man is requested to pay twenty-five cows. He may pay this by giving a mare, valued at four cows; a mule, valued at eight cows; a quantity of copper (37½ stils),[18] valued at three cows; a sabre, valued at seven cows; and three real cows, the sum of all making exactly twenty-five cows.

Among the Tushes,[19] the value of a horse was equal to eight cows or four rubles; a stallion, seven cows; a cow, four sheep; an ox, seven sheep; a gun, twenty cows or one hundred rubles; a cow, five rubles; a sheep, from one ruble and thirty kopeks to two rubles; a goat, eighty kopeks; a *koda* of wheat, five cows.

The blood-money among the Tushes varied in amount to the time and locality, consisting of eighty cows,[20] of sixty cows,[21] and of one hundred and twenty cows.[22]

Among the Pshavs the indemnity for blood was three hundred and sixty sheep, one hundred and eighty sheep being payable to the community of the victim for the so-called "family blood" (*siskhli sagvareulo*), while the other one hundred and eighty sheep were paid to the relatives of the dead person, and was called "for the head of the killed" (*thavi patronisa*). 436 692

---

[17] Zisserman: 224-5.
[18] A measurement equal to one pound.
[19] Khakhanov: 53.
[20] Khakhanov:
[21] Kovalevsky:
[22] Zisserman:

The *wergild,* among the Svans, is called *tsor.* In Princely Svanetia, the *tsor* for the murder of a man was not the same in the different communities. For example, in the community of Etseri, the *wergild* consisted in the payment by the murderer and his kinsmen to the kinsmen of the man killed thirteen *ts'khvadish*[23] of land, which is the equivalent of six and one-half Georgian *ktsevs,*[24] which in turn is the equivalent of two and one-half Russian *desiatins.*[25] Besides this, the kinsmen of the murderer were obliged to give presents to the members of the family of the deceased. These gifts consisted of domestic animals; each member received a certain kind of animal, one received an ox, another a horse, a third a sheep, etc. In the community of Becho, the *wergild* for the same crime was half that in the community previously mentioned. In Becho the indemnity was also paid with portions of land, called *naljons;* twelve *naljons* were paid for blood. If we take into consideration the fact that a *naljon* is only half a *ts'khvadish,* we shall find that the *wergild* paid for murder in both these communities was the same. If there was a difference, it was not very great. In the community of Mestia the *wergild* consisted of twelve *naljons* plus gifts of cattle, payable to the kinsmen of the person murdered. In the community of Ipari,[26] the *tsor* for murder was the approximate equivalent of one thousand Russian rubles, including in that sum all obligatory payments and gifts.

It is necessary to note, in addition to the above-stated conditions in Svanetia, that besides indemnifying to the kinsmen of the murdered man, it was obligatory also to give the weapon with which he was murdered. 622

In Svanetia, with the payment of every *tsor,* the murderer was always obliged to provide a specially arranged feast for the relatives of the slain man, which also involved great expense. It should be mentioned that the kinsmen of the culprit came to his assistance and helped him to meet the expenses of this payment of the *tsor*.

---

[23] Svan measure of land.
[24] Measure of land among the Georgians proper.
[25] Russian measure of land, equal to 2.70 acres.
[26] Kovalevsky: a, II, 36.

The *tsor* paid for the murder of a nobleman was twice that demanded for a peasant. "Le prix du sang," writes Bernoville[27] concerning this matter, "pour le meurtre d'un asnaour[28] était double de celui d'un paysan. . . ."

Concerning the indemnities paid for various injuries and mutilations, the amount of the *wergild* depended upon the kind of wound, location on the body, its size, depth and the possible danger to the well-being of the person injured. Also, there was taken into consideration the weapon itself, and the manner of wounding.

Among the Khevsurs, the damage received through blows and injuries inflicted with arms is measured according to the size of the wound and the weapon used. The indemnity imposed is from five to twenty-five cows. Among the Tushes, the indemnity for a simple blow with a dagger is five cows, but if the wound is inflicted with the edge of a sword or dagger, it is fifteen cows. In former times, for beating a woman the payment of eleven cows was imposed. Upon inflicting a wound, the offender is obliged to send one sheep called *saupatio* (meaning in English, "for dishonor") to the wounded and pay the surgeon for all expenses of treatment and cure of the wound. If such expenses are paid by the wounded person himself, the offender must reimburse him in full, according to custom.

In case of mutilation, the *wergild* paid by Khevsurs and Tushes differs according to the place of injury on the body. For the mutilation of an eye, among the Khevsurs are paid thirty cows; among the Tushes, sixteen cows. For the mutilation of one leg, the Khevsurs demand twenty-four cows, and the Tushes, sixteen. For cutting off an arm, the fine is twenty-four cows among the Tushes; the Khevsurs make a distinction in this case, which is not done by the Pshavs and Tushes, between the right and left

---

[27] Bernoville: 106.

[28] Asnaour—nobleman.

hands, so that for the loss of a right hand twenty-five cows are 682
required, and twenty-two for the left.

For any sort of serious mutilation the Pshavs levy an indemnity of sixteen cows. Among the Tushes, according to Zisserman,[29] the payment consisted of half the blood price, or sixty cows. For the mutilation of a person's fingers, the payment varies according to the finger injured; thus, for the thumb the fine is five cows; for the index finger, four cows; the middle finger, three cows; the ring finger, two cows; the little finger, one cow. For knocking out a tooth, the indemnity is one cow. Wounds on the face are measured with a small stick or piece of cord, which in turn is measured with seeds of grain. The Pshavs use grains of wheat in such a manner that after one grain is placed lengthwise, the second is put crosswise, the third lengthwise, the fourth crosswise, and so on; the indemnity is fixed according to the number of grains used, and cows are demanded in the same number. The Khevsurs use two kinds of grain, wheat and barley, placing them alternately. The number of grains used indicates the amount of the cows to be paid. The Tushes perform the same procedure with grains of barley, and from the whole number of grains they deduct two, the remaining number indicating the number of cows to be given as indemnity.

Many Khevsurs use the rules in the payment of the *wergild*^ as 578
a means of livelihood. They purposely start a quarrel, and in 682
fighting expose themselves to the blows of the enemy, in order to receive the wounds in the most "expensive" parts of the body. For example, Dr. Radde[30] relates that he met an attendant of a sanctuary in Khevsuria who had a wound about the size of a hen's egg on the left side of his head. On inquiry by Dr. Radde concerning the wound, he laughingly answered that it was almost fatal for him, but that he had at any rate made a good business of it and received sixteen cows as indemnity.

Among the Svans,[31] castration was regarded as the most 682
serious mutilation, the indemnity for which consisted, in some communities, of the full amount of the *tsor*. In other com-

---

[29] Zisserman: 250.
[30] Radde: c, 259.
[31] Kovalevsky: a, II, 36-7.

^ [see cat. 116, pp. 145-151 -- Analyst]

682 munities the indemnity for the same crime was half a *tsor*. For cutting off a nose, or putting out an eye, the indemnity was equal to one-third the *tsor*. Approximately the same amount was paid for the severing of a hand or foot.

Concerning the indemnity required for different wounds, the wound made by gunfire was regarded as the most grievous. A wound made by the blow of a sabre or dagger was considered as slight. For wounds made on parts of the skull or face, the indemnity was equal to half the *tsor*. Expenses for medical treatment were always paid by the culprit. Indemnities for different kinds of beatings did not amount to much, and consisted usually of one or two *ts'khvandish*, the equivalent of six or twelve Russian rubles, respectively.

3. THEFT

685 Theft had a peculiar ethical meaning and interpretation in the eyes of the people. Theft as such, taken generally as an abstract concept, did not exist and was not understood.

The interpretation and meaning of a theft differs according to the place, person and manner involved in committing it; it did not have blood vengeance as a result, but material restitution.

In some instances theft was regarded as a delict and consequently punished. In other cases it was a deed of bravery and courage—a matter of public admiration and esteem. Stealing from a fellow-member of one's own social group was viewed as a grave offense and was severely punished. The usual penalty for the crime consisted in the payment of sevenfold the stolen property, among the Pshavs and Khevsurs.[32] "The thief must repay in kind; thus, if he has stolen a ram, he must give seven rams, among the Tushes."[33] For repeated thefts it was even permissible to kill the thief, without being responsible for his murder, although this happened very seldom.[34]

Among the Svans,[35] theft had no other penalty than the return of the stolen property, although there was an exception made in

---

[32] Eristov: 132.

[33] Khakhanov: 53.

[34] Zisserman: 250.

[35] Kovalevsky: a, II, 38.

Princely Svanetia, where the rulers of the country required that 685
an indemnity be paid in addition, for the benefit of the ruling house. Theft connected with breaking into a house was regarded as a very serious offense, and a payment consisting of twelve *asish* was requested. The theft of the iron chain of the hearth (called *sakadeli* in the Georgian) or the small iron three-legged table on which bread was baked was regarded as an especially severe crime.

A discrimination in the importance of the crime was made according to the time and place where it was committed. A crime committed at night was worse than one committed during the day, and a crime perpetrated out of doors was of much less importance than one in a home.

Theft committed outside the group was regarded as neither a crime nor a delict, but on the contrary was viewed as an accomplishment of courage and bravery, elevating the culprit in social prestige and creating even gradations in distinction, according to the danger involved and the success of the accomplishment, the procedure resembling in some ways the *coups* of the American Indians.

Among the Georgians of Megrelia, in time past, a young man 685
had difficulty in getting a wife if he had not stolen at least one 577
horse.[36] There were various and numerous tales of gallant and 581
cunning thieves who outwitted their pursuers and escaped safely with their spoil, and who had the admiration of the people.

The same attitude prevailed also among the other peoples of the Caucasus. Among the Circassians, for example, a young man could not be successful with the fair sex if he had not committed a theft. Taitbout de Marigny[37] gives the following information concerning this matter: "Le plus grand reproche qu'une jeune fille puisse faire a un graçon, c'est de l'ai dire qu'il n'a pas encore pu derober une vache. Mais les proprietés sont respectées parmi les personnes que la paranté, l'amitié, l'hospitalité, ou d'autres liens unissent ensemble."

---

[36] Lamberti: 76-8.
[37] Taitbout de Marigny: 291.

4. ORDEAL

695 In cases where decisions were difficult, and where the judges were not able to detect the guilt of the suspect, they resorted to the ordeal, which had, in the eyes of the people, the meaning of God's judgment, since they believed that "by the issue of the ordeal the gods themselves were held to show on which side the right was."[38]

The ordeals used by the Georgian Highlanders were the same as those in universal practice in the ancient Georgian legislation, when the people were governed by custom, and which were later included in the famous Georgian Code of King Vakhtang VI.

Prince Vakhusht relates in his work that in order to find out who was the guilty party suspected in a theft, boiling water and a hot iron were used in Georgia.[39]

The ordeals which were practiced by the Georgians were: (1) the water ordeal, (2) the hot iron ordeal, and (3) the boiling water ordeal.

The water ordeal consisted of the following procedure: The suspected criminal or criminals, together with their accuser, were led to the bank of a river. Their hands and feet were then tied with cords, and in this condition they were thrown into the river. The person whose body remained on the surface of the water was regarded as the guilty one, and was consequently punished. The people believed that the body of a culprit was always rejected by the river, and that the innocent one was kept by the water. Consequently, the person whose body remained under water was considered innocent.

791 695 754 Nobody in Megrelia doubts the existence of sorcerers and witches, and because of this belief there have been cases of a highly dramatic nature. For example, after the Turkish War, in the villages near the town of Zugdidi, the epizooty broke out. This phenomenon was ascribed by the people to the action of witches, and in order to find out who they were, a Turk from the neighboring Georgian province of Samursakan was called. The

---

[38] Hartland: 175.
[39] Vakhusht: 6-7.

Turk was famous for his ability to discern witches. Arriving 791 at the village, the Turk ordered all the old women of the village 695 to be called together and thrown into the river. Those who sank 754 were cleared of suspicion, but those who did not were pronounced witches. A few unfortunate women who were kept afloat, perhaps by their clothes, were pronounced guilty of the practice of witchcraft and responsible for the calamity.[40]

During the procedure of the hot iron ordeal, as practiced by the 695 Georgians, an iron shred from a plow was heated until it was as red as burning coal; then it was placed on an elevated place in such a manner that it would be easy for a man to put his hands under it. Paper was put on the hands of the suspect, and he was obliged to take the iron with his hands, take three steps, and then throw it away. After this his hands were immediately bandaged and kept so for three days, after which time the bandages were removed. If his hands were not burned, the suspect was liberated; if they were, he was regarded as guilty and was therefore punished.

In the execution of the hot water ordeal, a boiler or big pot of boiling water was used. Into this was thrown a piece of iron, usually a horseshoe, which, with the introduction of Christianity, was changed to a small iron cross. The suspect was obliged to take the piece of iron out of the boiling water with his bare hand. After this the procedure was the same as in the hot iron ordeal; that is, the hand was wrapped and kept so for three days, after which the bandages were removed. If the hand showed no marks of burns, the suspect was pronounced innocent; otherwise, he was punished as guilty of the crime.

The ordeals practiced by the Tushes were the use of boiling water and hot iron. Here is a case known to me, in which boiling water was used. In a mill a number of women were suspected of having stolen a sack of flour. In order to detect the thief, it was decided to boil some water and put a horseshoe in it; the woman who burned her hand in taking it out would be adjudged guilty. Only one, by the name of Jabiani, proved to be uninjured after the test, and she was consequently acquitted. The rest of the women

---

[40] Borozdin: 34.

695 were considered to be participants in the crime and were punished. There were cases, however, when the person found guilty after the test by ordeal could be liberated from the punishment; this could occur only when the *kadagi* (prophet or fortune-teller) announced in the name of St. George that the culprit must be freed without any retaliation. Then a thank-offering was brought to the patron saint, consisting of a quantity of beer, and a sheep or cow to be sacrificed; after which the criminal was cleared before the members of his community.[41]

Interesting details concerning the ordeal of the boiling water as practiced in 17th century by the Georgians of Megrelia are described by the Italian missionary, Archangelo Lamberti.[42] "When the evidences of guilt of a suspect are not clear," writes Lamberti, "then Megrelians test the suspect with boiling water. For this procedure they have a special boiler one palm in diameter and two in circumference. This is filled with water, and a small iron cross placed on the bottom; a fire is made under the boiler. This fire, they say, must by all means be made from grape branches, which the accused must find himself and carry on his shoulders to the assigned place. When the water is boiling vigorously, the accused must put in his bare hand and take the iron cross from the bottom. Immediately after he withdraws his hand, attendants put it in a linen sack, bind it at the elbow, and seal it up. After three days the man is brought to the master, the hand is unbound and examined thoroughly. If there are no marks of burns on the hand, the suspect is dismissed as innocent. In the contrary case, where the hand is scalded, he is declared guilty and is punished without any hesitation."

The other method besides ordeal, whereby the decision was placed in the hands of supernatural power, was the duel. In certain cases the duel in Georgia[43] was formerly fought on horseback, with swords, between the accused and the accuser. The one thrown from his horse was regarded as the guilty party, and as

---

[41] Khakhanov: a, 54-5.
[42] Lamberti: 85.
[43] Vakhusht: 7.

punishment his head was cut off and his property confiscated 295
In case of grace, he was left alive, but his eyes were put out. Such a duel was required of traitors to the king, denouncers and blasphemers of idols and, later, of churches.

A custom similar to that just mentioned, the use of the duel for judicial decisions, was also formerly used in Megrelia.[44] When the evidences of guilt of two suspects were not clear, and it was difficult to detect the real culprit, the lord of the country ordered them to fight in the arena. "The time and place were fixed, and seconds were chosen. On the appointed day, both men appeared on horseback, wearing coats of mail, carrying shields, lances and swords, and accompanied by large numbers of armed friends. At a given signal they rushed upon each other, and the one who first received a wound was considered guilty. If both were wounded simultaneously, they both were pronounced guilty and severely punished."

5. OATH

By using the ordeal in judicial proceedings, the Georgian Highlanders looked to the Supreme Being to decide the guilt or innocence of the suspect. Besides being the judge, the Supreme Being was also invited to be a witness to the truthfulness of a given testimonial or statement in the process of taking an oath. This appeal to God meant that in case of false testimony, the person taking the oath submitted himself to God's punishment. In both cases, in ordeal and in oath-taking, we have the same phenomenon, the Deity acting as judge. The difference lies in the attitude of the accused: in the first instance, his role is active; in the second, when taking an oath, it is passive.

The substance of the oath is clearly shown in the Pshav ceremony of taking an oath, in which, simultaneously with the sacred words customarily uttered by the person taking the oath, the priest (*khevis-beri*) pours out the sacred beer from a cup with these words: "May the person who takes this oath, and his community be spilled and scattered as this beer, if he is not telling the truth."

---

[44] Lamberti: 86, 87.

695 Prince Vakhusht[45] relates the usage of taking the oath in Geor-
778 gia: "The oath is taken in the case of an insignificant offense," he writes, "at trials for thefts and in property disputes."

The oaths are taken in the name of the holy images, of sanctuaries, of dead ancestors, in the name of Queen Thamar and her son Lasha (by the Pshavs), in the name of "Mother Earth" (*deda mitsa*), in the name of children and husband (by married women), in the name of brother (by sister). The oaths have been taken also upon the carcass of a cat,[46] and upon a blacksmith's anvil.

"They consider cats also as some sort of sacred animal, as the ancient Egyptians did," writes Gulbiani about the Svans, "and they never, for any price, will agree to kill a cat, which they consider a great sin."[47]

I myself have been told many times that to kill a cat is a great sin, and that he who commits this act will have after his death *Tskhratsodva,* meaning in English, nine sins.

Besides the cat, the blacksmith's anvil was regarded as possessed of supernatural power, and was also used as a medium in taking an oath. "The Georgians of Samurzakan take an oath upon it and believe that the oath-breaker will be severely punished with some sort of misfortune."[48] The details concerning the beliefs of the people regarding the blacksmith's anvil are described in the chapter on sex and religion.

695 The Tushes had two ways of taking an oath.[49] Either the man who was taking the oath must walk thrice around the altar with the sacred standard and then take the oath; or the ceremony took place, not in the sanctuary as mentioned, but near the graves of the oath-taker's ancestors. The man knelt, and before him were placed the saddle of an ass and a vessel used for feeding dogs. The persons present at the ceremony addressed the dead with these words: "Our deceased! We are bringing this man to your justice; give him to whom you may desire in sacrifice and servi-

---

[45] Vakhusht: 7.
[46] Stepanov: 90.
[47] Gulbiani: 91.
[48] Machavariani, Bartolomei: 81.
[49] Zisserman: 250; Khakhanov: a, 54.

tude if he will not say the truth." After this the accused took 695 the oath.

Among the Khevsurs and Pshavs, when the judges have difficulty in their decision, they allow the accused to take the oath, which consists of the suspect giving vow to the truthfulness of his words.[50] In important cases another kind of oath is used, which is taken in the presence of witnesses, one from each community. As the person taking the oath and the witnesses are obliged before the ceremony to keep themselves in purity, they have no right to cohabit with their wives, and on the day appointed for the ceremony must neither eat nor drink. When the judges, the attendants of the sanctuary, and the people of the community are assembled, the man taking the oath approaches the sanctuary with his witnesses. He takes the sacred standard and the silver cup, and recites the oath as proof of the truthfulness of his testimony. At this time the witnesses put their hands on his shoulders and after every sentence uttered by the man taking the oath they all say amen. If the witnesses do not appear in the sanctuary for the ceremony, the oath is not regarded as effective.

Taking the oath also plays a very important role with other groups of the Georgian nation. For example, the Megrelians use it in solving doubtful cases.

A Megrelian has not only deep reverence for the *khati*,[1] but 695
also a great fear, which compels him to confess his delinquency, 783
if not at the moment of taking the oath, at least later, sometimes 577
after a long interval. The number of witnesses depend upon the importance of the case. Witnesses do not willingly accept this office, and their hesitation in taking part in the ceremony is based on the current belief of the people that a falsely taken oath will punish every participant in the proceedings during all his life. Consequently, the possible lack of success in enterprises or different troubles following one after the other, such as the death of relatives, bad harvest, epizooty and other evils, convince the Megrelian that the cause of all these calamities is the falsely taken oath. In such a case he goes to the party who has lost the case

---

[50] Eristov: 132.

[1] [i.e., sanctuary; see cat. 116, p. 25 ff. -- Analyst]

695 and pays him dearly in order that he may free him from the oath.
783 Sometimes not only the witness but even the person who took the
577 oath and won the case is brought to the conviction, in the same way as already stated dealing with witnesses, in the falsity of testimony given by him, and consequently he returns not only everything received by him through the judges, but also pays voluntarily a high fine in order to be freed from the oath.

As an illustration of this superstitious belief connected with the process of taking an oath, we may mention a certain appeal of a Megrelian made in court.[51] The petitioner had asked the court to take measures in endorsing his request, which was based on sheer superstition and was deeply engraved on the mind and conscience of the people as a custom inherited from their ancestors. "Fifteen years ago," said the Megrelian, "I had a dispute with my neighbor about land. We had a hearing, and when I took the oath, with ten witnesses admitted by the plaintiff, the land was given to me. From that time on I owned the property, and two years later sold half of it to the priest. Soon afterward, one misfortune after another began in my home, and I was convinced that the cause of all this was the falsely taken oath. In order to free myself from the calamity, I returned the land to the neighbor, but the priest will not return his portion for any price, and now I have come to ask the court to order the priest to sell back to me his portion of the land, and I will give a higher price than that fixed by our honest neighbors. If I am not freed from this oath I will be a most unhappy man." The authorities ignored this petition, but the priest was obliged to yield to the persistent demands of the man and his relatives and finally returned the land with great profits. In getting back the land, the Megrelian was satisfied, and his provoked conscience was calmed.

695 This fear of the people before the holy image (*khati*) and the
783 endeavor to appease its anger are based on the belief that everyone
787 is able to put a curse on his enemy before a *khati*, for which he
577 has to pray and ask the deity to punish his antagonist. Consequently, according to the people's opinion, the offender will be

---

[51] Borozdin: 36.

severely punished by the *khati* not only during his earthly life but 695
also after his death in eternity. This procedure, so dreaded by the 783
Megrelians, is known by them under the name of *khatis genochama,* 789
meaning in English, "transmission to the *khati.*" When someone 577
among them finds that he is cursed, or, to use the Megrelian expression, *genochamilie* (meaning "is given over") by his enemy he hastens to make peace with him and satisfies all his claims in order, as they say, "to be freed from the wrath of *khati.*"

But there is a way to avoid the anger of *khati* in giving false 695
testimony. The man by taking an oath is not always obliged to 783
tell "the truth and only the truth," but he may also lie and escape 577
unpunished, with a clear conscience and peace in his criminal heart. To do this, he concludes some sort of contract or rather promises a bribe to the *khati* consisting of some sort of offering, such as a cow or sheep. This fact is described by the Italian A. Lamberti, as observed by him among the Georgians of Megrelia. "By small evidences the Megrelians have the custom," writes A. Lamberti,[52] "of permitting the accused to exculpate himself by taking an oath. The oath must be taken before any one of the holy images. The plaintiff chooses the holy image, and also the sanctuary where the accused (defender) must take the oath. This place is kept in secrecy by him, because if the accused finds out the place appointed for the ceremony he will present himself before the holy image the day before the appointed time, kneel before it and say: 'Thou knowest well that I have committed the crime and that I am confessing now on my knees to you and declaring my guilt; may this confession remain between us both, and as I have fulfilled my duty toward you with this confession, (please) forgive me if in the presence of the others I shall deny my guilt. In order that thou wilt not be angry with me I pledge thee a cow (or sheep).' After this secret confession he counts his conscience clean, and in taking the oath officially before this image he is convinced that he has full right to lie and still be unharmed."

---

[52] Lamberti: 86.

CHAPTER XII

THE LAW OF CONTRACT AND MUTUAL AID

675 A less developed judicial form among the Georgian Highlanders is the law of contract. To understand the cause of this is not difficult if we remember the joint ownership of their social groups with almost the entire absence of individual property, free labor creating personal capital, and the limited freedom of the individual. Among the Svans, such original native contracts as loan, alienation of property (sale), and barter may be mentioned. They all have Svan names: loan is called *limpshten;* sale, *livde;* and barter is known under the name of *litsádunal.* The other contracts have Georgian names, which indicate their place of origin—Georgia proper—whence they were introduced into Svanetia.

In concluding the contract the act of hand-striking among the Khevsurs and Tushes was such an important factor that its validity did not lose its power even in a case when later it was disclosed that there was fraud on the part of one of the contracting parties. However, there was also the possibility that the hand-striking could be substituted by a person taking the oath for responsibility in the fulfillment of the contract.

675 681 Among the Khevsurs, one of the interesting features of the law of contract was that the responsibilities created by a contract were not limited in time. There were a few cases, in which debts incurred more than two hundred years ago were still outstanding.[1] Here is an example of one of the most characteristic instances. A husband buried his wife without the necessary (according to custom) honors and expenses. During a period of two hundred years the kinsmen of the wife demanded from the kinsmen of the husband the amount of money necessary to cover all funeral expenses, as an indemnity for his neglect. The justice did not

---

[1] Kovalevsky: a, II, 111.

reject the demand, and in 1881 it was decreed that an indemnity 675
of three hundred rubles be paid by the great-great-great-grandsons 681
of the culpable husband to the collateral descendants in the fifth generation of the deceased woman. Another case[2] of the same nature is as follows: One Khevsur pretended before a certain Pshav that his grandfather, before the Russian invasion of the Caucasus, had caught in the river Aragua a big salmon, which was so large that he was not able to take it home, and therefore had left it in the water, tied to a stone, intending to go for it with a mule the next day. However, the fish was stolen during the night, according to the claimant, by the grandfather of the Pshav. On this ground the Khevsur demanded satisfaction in the following manner: The salmon was worth a sheep; the sheep during the fifty years' time could have given wool and cheese, equivalent in value to at least ten cows; and besides this there would have been an increase of at least one hundred and fifty head. There was also to be added to the above, five cows as a gift for the judges. The total indemnity to be paid by the Pshav to the Khevsur was fixed at fifty-five cows, or two hundred and seventy-five rubles.

Taking into consideration the different kinds of contracts, we 675
notice at first the extreme rarity of grants amongst Khevsurs, 428
Pshavs, and Tushes. The making of a grant was not permitted to the person who had a legitimate heir in his family. This same situation was found among the Svans also. This may be explained by the small extent of private ownership and the prohibition of alienation of family property, with the exception of gifts to the communal sanctuary, the *Khati*.

In alienation of land property, the law of the preferential 675
purchase was vigorously enforced. The property had to be 432
offered first to the relatives of the person disposing of the property, and in case of a denial on their part, it was offered to neighbors; and only after their refusal was full freedom given to sell the land to a stranger. In selling the property to a stranger who was a member of another community, the Khevsur did not

---

[2] Zisserman: 226.

675 regard the purchase as complete and legal until the following
432 customary procedure was observed: both the seller and buyer went to the land offered for sale, and there in the presence of at least one witness, the seller, stamping his foot on the ground, said to the buyer: "May the purchase of this land bring good luck to you." Only after this ceremony was the deed regarded as legally closed.

675 It is necessary to note that among the Svans, unlike the other
432 groups of Georgian Highlanders, the land property sold to a
592 stranger who was not a member of the community could not be regarded as definitely in his possession, because the relatives, and even the neighbors of the family from whom he purchased the property, have full right to claim the property and return to him the purchase price. The land belonging to a family, called *samu,* is very seldom sold by the Svans—only in cases of the most urgent necessity, such as in the payment of blood-*tsor* (*wergild*), or for the arranging of funeral or commemorative ceremonies, called *konch'khar.* Although the sale of the family land might occur in extreme cases, there were household objects which could not be sold under any circumstances, such as the iron chain, called *sakideli* in the Georgian, on which is suspended the cooking pot on the hearth, and the *kerai,* the little iron table used for baking bread. All transactions of sale took place in the presence of witnesses.

675 The loan of property had, among the Khevsurs and Tushes,
426 three different forms: (a) a loan was given without any interest; (b) with certain interest; (c) instead of interest payable in money, the creditor had full right to use for his own benefit the property pawned to him by the debtor as security.

(a) A loan was given without interest with sowing-seed, cattle for agriculture, general work, and with milk products, generally for a certain period of time. In case the loaned property was not returned within the time fixed by both parties, an indemnity equal in amount to one-fifth of the loaned property was demanded.

(b) The Khevsurs and Tushes also made loans at a certain rate of interest, usually amounting to thirty percent, payable annually.

(c) There was also another form of loan, in which, instead of 675 the interest being paid in money, the creditor had full right to use 426 the pawned property for his own benefit during the whole term of the mortgage. This sort of contract, as it was used by the Pshavs, Tushes, and Khevsurs, must be regarded as a remainder of a legal form well known in ancient Georgia, called *girau,* according to which a creditor had the right of exploitation and benefit from the land pawned to him, from the very first day of the conclusion of the mortgage. It is interesting to note the custom performed at the time of making such a loan.[3] The creditor takes the ear of one of the witnesses, and addressing all who are present, says: "Remember that this man (the name is said) has borrowed money from me."

A loan, called *limpshten* by the Svans, consisted generally of natural objects, such as bread and corn. At the end of the year the debtor was obliged to return what was borrowed plus one-third of its value as interest; in other places, as in the community of Becho, the interest paid for a loan was even as high as fifty percent, or half the value of what was borrowed.

Custom clearly distinguished between the act of making a loan and the giving of a thing in preservation. The difference was the absence of the right to use and exploit the thing given for preservation, and the obligation to return the same thing, not its material equivalent. For any sort of damage done to the property given for preservation, the person who took it was responsible for the reparation, the amount of which was determined after the damage was done. Failure to return the property was regarded as a theft, in the same manner as in the Georgian Code of Vakhtang VI, and consequently the penalty was the same as for theft: the culpable person had to pay the indemnity, the amount of which was double the value of the stolen thing.

In hiring a person, the proprietor was obliged, among the 675 Khevsurs and Tushes, not only to supply the hired person with 466 room and board, but also to provide clothing and shoes for him. The contracts with shepherds show some peculiarities: When a

---

[3] Kovalevsky: a, II, 110.

675 466 shepherd received a flock of sheep or herd of cattle from anyone to care for, he kept them together with his own flock. For his work he received all the milk from both herds; and any increase was divided between the shepherd and the owner of the flock or herd, according to the number of head of cattle or sheep. Among the Pshavs, the shepherd was paid with a part of the increase, which generally consisted of forty young (six-months old) sheep. If a shepherd left the flocks without his master's permission, and if some damage occurred to the flocks at that time, he was requested to make reparation; and in a case where the flocks were seized or driven away by an enemy, the shepherd lost his wages.[4]

675 426 [427] The arable land was rented usually under the following condition: the lease-holder deducted from the harvest received by him the amount of sowing-seed used, and half the rest was paid as rent to the owner of the land.

In all the above mentioned contracts, it was permissible for several persons to accept joint responsibility. The one among them who paid first acquired the right to demand from his fellow partners their obligatory share of payment.

A particular feature is found among the Khevsurs, the order of debt security by guarantor (the *mzevali*). The creditor has full right to compel any member of the debtor's community to act as *mzevali*. This law has its foundation in the form of the social organization where group solidarity and reciprocal responsibility were the basis. The person who pays the debt of another man acquires toward the debtor the same rights as the owner of a stolen thing has toward a thief; that is, he has the right to demand from the debtor a payment equal to double the original sum. If the debtor avoids payment again at this time, the *mzevali* (guarantor) chosen by the creditor transfers his rights to a third person, who in turn acquires the right to receive from the debtor not double but four times the sum of his original debt. As an illustration of this custom, we may mention the following fact:[5] A rich Khevsur living in the valley of Ersto, by the name of

---

[4] Zisserman: 251.

[5] Khudadov: XIV, 1.

Georgi Bistlauri, related that twelve years ago two of his cousins, 675 on their way to the sanctuary, bought from a Khevsur a lamb for 426 one ruble and twenty kopeks. One of them paid his part of sixty kopeks, but the other, not having the money with him at the time, promised to pay after one year. But he did not keep his word, and the creditor chose a *mzevali,* who in turn chose another, and he another, etc. After twelve years the sixty kopeks of the original debt, the price of the half lamb, was transformed into that of sixty cows, or its equivalent—six hundred rubles—which makes one thousand times the original sum. Eristov[6] gives the following information concerning *mzevali:* "If a person does not pay a debt, or does not meet the obligations required by justice, the offended person goes to a stranger (who has no interest or connection with the proceedings), gives him as a gift one ruble and twenty kopeks, and proclaims him his *mzevali,* and in the meantime takes from him the whole amount of the debt owing to him by the prosecuted person. Three years after his appointment, the *mzevali* goes to the debtor and demands from him, instead of one ruble, twenty-one rubles. . . . In the event the debtor refuses to pay, the *mzevali* approaches another person as *mzevali* and takes from him the sum of money which he should have received from the debtor. In such a manner the office of *mzevali* may be transferred from one person to another, going to as many as twenty or thirty persons, and the debt multiplies twenty times every three years.

As contracts of partnership, we may consider also the rules 675 relating to agriculture, fishing, and hunting.

There are no special restrictions for fishing. Fish are caught [226] in various ways. When the Khevsurs or Tushes catch a large fish, the man who catches it gets the head, and the rest is divided into equal parts among the other fishermen.

Hunting is also free to the Georgian Highlanders. 675

Among the Khevsurs,[7] who love the dangerous sport of hunting 224 mountain goats, when two or more hunters take part in an expedition, the pelt of the slain animal belongs to the hunter who kills it, the horns are given to the *khati* of the community as a

---

[6] Eristov: 133.

[7] *Ibid.,* 127.

224 thank-offering for the success of the hunt, and the flesh is divided
[675] equally among all the hunters.

The Svans have especially elaborate customs connected with
784 hunting, which they regard as a sacred affair. The religious
224 character of the hunt is explained by their belief in the existence
[776] of deities for the protection of game and hunters. The hunters are respected by the people who consider them fortunate in enjoying the favor of the deities. According to their conviction, not everyone may succeed in the hunt, but only those who are known for their irreproachable conduct and high morality. The hunter must live a clean life and be careful in his relations with women, who are regarded as unclean. The hunter must have no intercourse with other women than his wife. Even with her he is obliged to cease relations one day before the hunting expedition. He has no right to start for the hunt when any woman in his own family is having monthly issue, nor even if such a woman be one of his own neighbors. It is also necessary for him to avoid the proximity of women with new-born babies until they have been purified by a priest.

Besides avoiding women, the hunter must pay his respects to the killed game and treat the horns, bones, and other parts of the carcass with reverence. If he does not, the hunter will be punished by the god of the hunt, who will make him unsuccessful in all his undertakings. Thus, for example, one hunter from the community of Ushkul, related[8] that ever since his brother became angry at something and threw the leg of a wild goat which he had killed into the dung-heap, he always suffer failure in the hunt.

224 The hunter goes alone or is accompanied by a helper, who carries his arms and other things and whose duty it is to bring home the game. He has the special name of *mikatsiri,* meaning "the carrier of the leader sack;" the word *katsi* meaning sack.

When the hunter reaches the place of his destination, where he has decided to hunt, he lights candles, fixes them upon a tree or stone along with burning coals, and throws on them the pieces of beeswax. If he has brought flour instead of bread, he bakes

---

[8] Dmitriev: 168.

cakes from it. After this, facing the east, he kneels upon his 224
right knee and with bread and brandy in his hands he prays to the deity of the hunt and the patron of game—the goddess *Dal*, asking her for help and success in the hunt. The Svans[*] represent her as a woman of great beauty who lives on the summits of the mountains.

After the prayer the hunter eats his bread, and if he is accompanied by a helper, he gives half the bread to him and they eat it with care and reverence, sacramentally. After this, the hunt begins.

If the Svan hunter succeeds in killing an animal, which he considers to be a special favor of the deity, he kindles a fire and skins the animal. He removes the inside parts of the animal, cleans them, and fixing the heart and liver on a wooden spit, fries them and brings them as a thank-offering to the deity.

After this the hunter and his assistant have their meal; then they divide the spoils. According to ancient custom, the head, neck and pelt belong to the hunter, and the rest is divided equally between them, with the assistant having the right of choice.

The hunter and his helper then return home late in the evening, 224
secretly so that no one may see them and in order to escape the 264
danger of someone's evil eye. The hunter and his helper both are joyfully welcomed in their families, where everyone gives thanks and praise to the deity of the hunt for their success. A clean pot with water from which no one has drunk is placed on the fire to boil the meat. When it is ready to eat, the family sits down to supper. The eating itself has a sacramental character and is accompanied by the precaution that not even the smallest piece of meat is dropped on the floor. The bones of the animal are carefully cleaned, put together and preserved. The horns are given as a thank-offering to the *Khati*, or are preserved at home.

We have given above a description of the individual hunt as 224
practiced by the Svans, where the hunter goes alone or is ac- 476
companied only by his assistant, who takes no active part in the hunt itself. But there are other hunting expeditions in Svanetia

---

[*] Margiani: 70-71.

224 in which many hunters take part. In such cases, if only one of
476 the hunters kills an animal, he gets the head, neck and pelt, while
the remainder is divided equally among them all, with the assistant of the man who killed the animal having the right to choose his portion according to his own taste.

224 There is another interesting hunting custom among the Svans.
476 When two hunters meet while hunting, if the meeting is spontane-
675 ous and not pre-arranged, they may enter into a mutual agreement
with the Svan words, *sev esh'khvi,* meaning "one success." After this the fulfillment of the agreement is binding on both of them and has the character of a legal contract. They are thus obliged to divide the spoils of the hunt equally, even if it is killed by only one of them.

They hunt separately all day and meet again in the evening at the place agreed upon. The division of the spoil is not obligatory at the second meeting if the agreement was not concluded at the first, as established by custom, but the successful hunter may "treat" his partner with a portion of meat if he wishes to do so.

224 Besides the Svans, the other groups of Georgian Highlanders—
776 the Khevsurs, Pshavs, and Tushes—believe in the existence of
171 spirits and protectors of game and hunters. These spirits are
called *angelozi.*

Similar beliefs are found among other groups in the Georgian nation as well as among other peoples in the Caucasus, such as the Abkhazes, Ossetes, Circassians, and others.

Thus the Georgians of Megrelia[10] believe in the existence of the "Queen of the Forest," called *Tgashi mapa,* and represented as a beautiful woman with long hair. She is regarded as the patroness of all wild animals, and on her good will depends the success of the hunter. The Abkhazians have a patron of all game called *Ajvepsha.*[11]

224 It should be noted that in addition to the belief in the existence
198 of forest deities and spirits which protect wild animals, some of
171 the people of the Caucasus possess also a secret hunting language.

---

[10] Teptsov: b, 12.
[11] Zvanbai: Kavkaz, 81-2.

This point is discussed by J. Potocki,[12] J. Reineggs,[13] J. Klaproth,[14] 224
Lulie,[15] A. Dirr,[16] and others. The secret language of 198
hunters, as used by the Abkhazians, was recorded by A. Dirr, and 171
that of the Circassians has been recorded by all the other writers named above.

A contract of partnership among the Georgian Highlanders, 675
similar to that described in the account of the hunting expeditions, 476
is practiced also in their field work. In the eastern part of 241
Georgia, partnerships are formed for the ploughing of fields, because the ploughing in that part of the country demands considerable expense and depends upon the nature of the ground and the construction of the plow itself, which is cumbersome and requires many hands and animals.

In the eastern part of Georgia the cultivation of land is very expensive. Thus, in order to operate a plow it is necessary to have eight ploughmen, ten pair of oxen, five or six workmen, and many other things. Therefore, only wealthy people are in position to accomplish this work without assistance. The people who are unable to do this because of their limited material resources, find a way out of the difficulty by forming a partnership for the execution of the work. One home supplies the plow-shred, called *sakveti,* and two pairs of oxen, called *kevari-khari.* Another supplies leather straps, another supplies the driver of the plow, the fourth is the ploughman himself, who also brings two oxen with him, etc. In such a manner a number of homes put together one plow, called in the Georgian, *guthani,* and they plough for everyone who takes part in the partnership, in turn.[17] In Khevsuria and Pshavia, where the land is cultivated with small, light plows, with only two oxen, it may happen that two men will be able to get the necessary things together: each furnishes an ox, and iron parts of the plow are bought jointly by both partners. The same manner of ploughing, as practiced in the eastern part of

---

[12] Klaproth: b, 381.
[13] Potocki: 168-69.
[14] Dirr.
[15] Lulje.
[16] Reineggs.
[17] Khakhanov: c, 192-95.

675 Georgia, is found also in the district of Zakatali, where it is neces-
476 sary for each plow to have not less than five pair of oxen.[18]

241 On the other hand, in the western part of Georgia, where the climate is mild and humid, such partnerships are not used in ploughing, because the plow itself is very light and requires no more than one man and one pair of oxen. However, the climatic and hydrographic conditions in western Georgia, as for example, in Megrelia, Guria and Imerethi, require the mutual assistance of the peasants in other lines of field work.

The cultivation of maize, which is the principal staple food in western Georgia, requires much labor and care. The main work consists in weeding out the over-growth from the fields, which is called *margloba* in the Georgian language, and *majirua* in the Megrelian. The abundance of rain and the rich, fertile soil of the country create the best conditions for the thriving over-growth. The ground soon after the ploughing usually is covered with weeds of all sorts, which grow so fast and thick that in a very short time they threaten to smother the new shoots of corn. In order to protect the crop until it is tall and strong, it is necessary to weed out the whole field from the over-growth at least three times every season; otherwise, the harvest will be lost. To accomplish this work without any assistance on the part of the villagers would be impossible for a single family, and failure to do this meant the loss of the harvest and consequently privation and endangering of the very existence of the family. The way out of this difficult position is found in the custom of mutual assistance and the reciprocal help in the cultivation of the land, which is known under the Georgian name of *nadoba.*

During the time of sowing or weeding out of the maize field, the Megrelian villager calls his neighbors for assistance and every one of them willingly goes to help him. The owner provides a good lunch and heavy supper, with plenty of wine. In the evening, when the day's work is over, they return from the field singing, and sit at the supper table for a long time, singing the national songs and making speeches until late in the night, so that in this custom we have mutual assistance with the work, its accomplishment and plenty of "good time." It is interesting to watch a *nadoba* when a group of twenty men get together singing loudly.[19] 675 476 241

---

[18] Bakradze: b, 271.

The custom of mutual assistance in the field work, the *nadoba*, by the Megrelians, is described also by the Italian missionary of the seventeenth century, Archangelo Lamberti,[20] who lived among the Megrelians for many years. "The land is ploughed and sowed with such calculation," writes Lamberti, "that the harvesting should be finished on the day of Saints Peter and Paul, the principal holiday in Megrelia. Because of the dampness, the weeds grow in abundance, and plenty of work is necessary to clear the ground of them. As this task requires promptness, the separate families would not be able to accomplish it with their own force, and therefore they invite their neighbors to assist them. The villagers who begin the weeding out of the fields invite those neighbors whose fields are not yet ready for the same work, and they are assisted in turn in the accomplishment of the same work when their fields are ready."

There is mutual assistance in Megrelia also in husking the maize. The people assemble at the home where the work is to be done, and after a day's work in the field, the host prepares a big supper, at which all the people who take part in the work have a good time, singing and dancing until late at night.

The forming of partnerships in field work[A] exists not only among 171 the Georgians, as has been described, but also among the other peoples of the Caucasus, such as the Ossetes[21] and others. The partnership for the execution of field work is called *goi*[22] by the Avars; by the Laks of Daghestan mutual assistance in the field work is called *marsha*.[23] The Kumiks of the Terek district practiced mutual assistance in harvesting corn, which they call *bulka*.

Reciprocal assistance and co-operation as described above are 476 evident not only in the field and home work, and not only in one

---

[19] Borozdin: 7.
[20] Lamberti: 57.
[21] Kovalevsky:
[22] Lvov: 13-14.
[23] Omarov: 916.

A [See cat. 116, pp 171-173 -- Analyst]

476 part of the country, but among all groups of the Georgian nation, by Highlanders and Lowlanders alike, in every manner of life, in customs connected with child-birth as well as in wedding ceremonies and funerals.

As we saw in describing the customs connected with child-birth among the Khevsurs, the woman lives in separation during the time of bearing the child. She bears the child in a specially constructed hut called *kokhi,* and all the women of the village who are in separation at that time help her to construct the hut. After the child's birth, she goes to live in the *samrevlo,* with the women in a state of menstruation. Each *samrevlo* belongs to a certain number of families, and is constructed by their mutual efforts. In different ceremonies which are prescribed by custom, during child-birth as well afterward, the relatives and neighbors take an active interest in the welfare of the mother and child, protecting them from the possible attack of evil spirits, and presenting gifts to the new-born child, etc.

During marriage ceremonies, all the relatives of the young couple take an active interest in their welfare. The relatives of the bridegroom are busy supplying him with the resources necessary to help him meet the expenses of the wedding ceremony. During the wedding celebrations, the official presentation of gifts takes place, when the names of the donors and the gifts given by them are announced before all who are assembled. This is done with the aim of reciprocal repayment in a similar case by the receiving party to the giver, so that on this occasion we have likewise reciprocal assistance—the give-and-take.

764 476 The custom of mutual assistance is especially manifested in meeting the expenses of funeral ceremonies. Funeral ceremonies in Georgia are very complicated and require large expenses. With a few exceptions of rich people, to perform all the required procedure would be the ruin of the majority of the people, were it not for the help of kinsmen and neighbors, so that in this case also we have reciprocal assistance expressed in the give and take. Help is rendered with things of nature, such as corn, wine, etc., or with money. The name of the donor and the kind of gift presented by him are recorded on a special list. Usually, at the

entrance door of the home of the dead man is placed a table, 764
where a man, with a few assistants, writes down the names of the 176
visitors and their gifts. I have observed many such occurrences in Megrelia. Everyone, with the exception of children, must register his name and give something. This is done so as to assure the donor of similar assistance if his home should be stricken with the same calamity. Everyone helping another in such a case is sure to be helped himself on a similar occasion. In the Georgian province of Guria in times past the villagers brought to the families stricken with death,—flour, cheese, wine, beans, and in more recent times, with the stabilization of monetary system in Georgia, money was given, which consisted of from ten to thirty kopeks given by neighbors, and from one to ten rubles by relatives. Here also, as in Megrelia, the names and gifts are recorded on a special list. The monetary offering is called in Guria *tsasaburavi,* meaning "covering," or "for covering." On the other hand, the help with things of nature, as mentioned, is called *shesatseri,* meaning "offering."[24] The custom of reciprocal help in such cases is regarded by the Georgians of Guria as obligatory, and if anyone, for example in the district of Lanchkuti, did not fulfill this requirement, he was regarded with distrust by everyone.[25] In the same way as among the Georgians of Guria and Megrelia, the custom of mutual assistance is practiced by other groups of the Georgian nation. Among the Georgians of Ratcha, for example, the family of the deceased is given an offering called *shesatseravi,* consisting of from twenty pounds to two puds of corn for bread, or from twenty-seven to forty-five loaves of baked bread. Others bring wine, beans, etc. The relatives help with money, everyone giving from forty kopeks to two rubles. This monetary help is called *sapeni.* The name of the donor and the gift are recorded, as among the Georgians of Guria and Megrelia.

Among the Khevsurs, during the annual commemoration of 769
the dead, all relatives of the deceased come together, even from 602
the outlying villages, and everyone brings a quantity of brandy, consisting of two or three *thungi,* the equivalent of from ten to

---

[24] Mamaladze: 83.
[25] Kereselidze: 236.

769 fifteen bottles.[26] Among the Svans, for the commemoration
602 ceremonies for the dead, the relatives of the deceased person bring, from every home, thirty small loaves of bread, called *lekhde*. These loaves are for consumption during the feast;[27] or the Svans,[28] before the commemoration celebration, visit all the relatives and collect the necessary supplies for the feast.

476 From the examples given in this chapter, we notice that in
182 every group and community is found a clearly marked group
571 solidarity expressed in reciprocal assistance and co-operation. We see that this phenomenon is evident not only in the field and home work, but is manifested by all groups of the Georgian nation—by Highlanders and Lowlanders alike, in every manner of life, in the customs connected with childbirth as well as in wedding ceremonies and funerals, and in time of danger everyone finds protection and refuge among his kinsmen. The last mentioned fact is clearly illustrated in the customs of blood-feud, where every offender is supported by his relatives; on the other hand, kinsmen of the victim seek redress and punishment of the culprit. In conclusion, we may admit that the social life of the communities among the Georgian Highlanders is based on a complex of customs, clearly defined and enforced by the group, co-ordinating and regulating the social and individual life of the people, creating between the members interdependence and symmetry of action, reciprocity with security, where every assistance is accordingly returned and repaid.

[see cat. 116, p. 162 ff.--Analyst]

---

[26] Radde: d, 87.
[27] Eristov: b, 41.
[28] Stoinav: 439.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE BIBLIOGRAPHY[1]

E.O.—The Ethnographical Review. (Etnograficheskoe obozrenie.) Moscow. (Russian periodical.)

H.E.R.—Hasting's *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.* New York, 1928.

Izvestia of the C.H.A.I.—Izvestia (Bulletin) *of the Caucasian Historico-Archeological Institute.* Tiflis (Georgia). This publication is also issued under the French title: *Bulletin de L'Institut Caucasien d'histoire et d'Archéologie.*

Izvestia and *Zapiski* of the C.B.I.R.G. *Soc.—Izvestia* and *Zapiski* (Bulletins and Memoirs) *of the Caucasian Branch of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society.* (Izvestia-Zapiski Kavkazskago otdela Imperatorskago Russkago Geograficheskago Obsh'chestva.) Tiflis.

Izvestia and Zapiski of the I.R.G. Soc.—Izvestia (Bulletins) *and Zapiski* (Memoirs) *of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society.* (Izvestia-Zapiski Imperatorskago Russkago Geograficheskago Obsh'chestva.) St. Petersburg. (Leningrad.)

R.A.J.—The Russian Anthropological Journal. (Russki Antropologicheski Jurnal.) Moscow.

S.M.C.—Sbornik (Magazine) *of the Material Describing the Localities and Tribes of the Caucasus.* (Sbornik Materialov po Opisaniu Mestnostei i Plemen Kavkaza.) Tiflis.

E.S.S.—Encyclopedia of Social Sciences. New York, 1930-35.

T.A.D.—Trudi (Transactions) *and Izvestia* (Bulletins) *of the Friends of Natural Sciences, Anthropology and Ethnography,* University of Moscow, Anthropological Division. The publications of this Society also have the French title: *Bulletin de la Société Impériale des Amis des Sciences Naturelles de Moscou.*

Z. f. E.—Zeitschrift fuer Ethnologie, Organ der Berliner Gasellschaft fuer Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte. Berlin.

---

[1] Throughout the Bibliography, Russian titles are given in parentheses following titles in English, French, or German.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

113 Abasadze, Nicolai L. von: "Die Familiengemeinde bei den Gruzinern. Uebersetzung aus dem russischen." *Archiv. fuer Anthropologie*, Vol. 25, St. 435-442. 1894. The original was published in the Russian, under the title "Semeinaia Obsh'china u Gruzin." (Didi-Ojakhi) in *E.O.*, Vol. 3, pp. 13-28. Moscow, 1889. Our quotations are taken from the Russian work.

Ananikian, Mardiros, H.: "Armenian Mythology," in *The Mythology of All Races*. 13 vols. Boston, 1925. See Vol. 7, pp. 1-100.

Anisimov, I. S.: "The Jews—Mountaineers of the Caucasus." (Kavkazskie evrei-gortsi.) *Sbornik of Ethnographical Material of the Dashkov Museum*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1888.

Arutinov, A. A.: "Udins. Material for the Anthropology of the Caucasus." (Udini. Materiali dlia antropologii Kavkaza.) In *T.A.D.*, Vol. 23, Moscow, 1905; also in *R.A.J.*, Vols. 21-22, Nos. 1-2, pp. 73-96. Moscow, 1905.

Bakradze, D. Z.: (a) "Svanetia." *Zapiski of the C.B.I.R.G. Soc.*, Vol. VI (part of Izledovania i Materiali), pp. 19-128. Tiflis, 1864.

——— (b) "Notes on Zakatal District" (Zametki o zakatal'skom okruge). *Zapiski of the C.B.I.R.G. Soc.*, Vol. 14, Pt. 1. Tiflis, 1890.

Bardavelidze-Lomia, Vera: "Sur le rituel concernant la procreation des enfants chez les montagnards de Karthlie." (Bavshis dabadebastan dakavshirebuli rituali mthian Kartlshi.) *Bulletin du Musee de Georgiē*, tome IV, pp. 235-280. Tiflis, 1927. (In the Georgian.)

Bartolomei, I. A.: "Voyage to Free Svanetia." (Poezdka v vol'nuiu Svanetiu.) *Zapiski of the C.B.I.R.G. Soc.*, Vol. 3, pp. 149-239. Tiflis, 1855.

Batchelor, J.: *The Ainu of Japan*. New York, 1895.

Baye, Baron Josephe de: "Au sud de la chaine du Caucase. Souvenir d'une mission. Conférence donée a la société de géographie dans la seance du 17 Mars, 1899." *Revue de Géographiie*, Vol. 44, pp. 241-275; 340-369. Paris, April-May, 1899.

Bejanov, M.: "The Village Vartashen and Its Inhabitants." (Kratkia svedenia o sele Vartashen i ego jiteliakh.) *S.M.C.*, Vol. 14, Pt. 1, pp. 213-62. Tiflis, 1892.

Bell, J. S.: *Journal of a Three Years Residence in Circassia*. 2 vols. London, 1840.

Bernoville, Raphael: *Le Souanétie libre épisode d'un voyage a la chaîne centrale du Caucase*. Paris, 1875.

Boas, F.: "The Eskimo of Baffin Land and Hudson Bay." *Bulletin of Am. Mus. of Nat. History*, Vol. 15. New York, 1907.

Borozdin, K. A.: "Serfdom in Megrelia." (Krepostnoe sostoianie v Mingrelii.) *Zapiski of the C.B.I.R.G. Soc.*, Vol. VII, pp. 1-68. Tiflis, 1866.

Brosset, M.: *L'histoire de la Géorgie depuis l'antiquité jusqu'an 19-e siècle.* St. Petersburg (Leningrad).

Busch, N. A.: "Chewsurien und Tuschetien." Petermann's *Mitteilungen*, Vol. 52, pp. 136-39; 153-59; 204-10; 222-27. Gotha, 1906.

Byhan, Dr. Artur: "Die Kaukasischen Voelker." In Dr. G. Buschan's *Illustrierte Voelkerkunde*, Vol. II, Pt. 2, pp. 659-844. Stuttgart, 1922-1926.

Chantre, Ernest: *Recherches anthropologiques dans le Caucase.* 4 vols. and Atlas. Paris-Lyon, 1885-87.

Chardin, Sir John: *Journal du voyage en Perse et aux Indes Orientales par la Mer Noire et par la Colchide.* Paris, 1687. Amsterdam, 1688.

Chitaia, G.: "The Svanian Sakurtskhil." *Georgica*, I, 1, pp. 89-100. London, October, 1935. See introduction of the same work in the Georgian language, published in the *Bulletin du Musee de Georgie*, Vol. 2.

Chursin, G.: (a) "Customs and Beliefs in Kakhetia." (Narodnie obichai i verovania Kakhetii.) *Zapiski of the C.B.I.R.G. Soc.*, Vol. 25, 2. St. Petersburg (Leningrad), 1905.

——— (b) *Sketches on the Ethnology of the Caucasus.* (Ocherki po etnologii Kavkaza.) Tiflis, 1913.

——— (c) "Les Kourdes d'Azerbaidjan (Remarques ethnographiques)." (Azerbaidjanskie Kurdi.—Etnograficheskie zametki.) *Izvestia of the G.H.A.I.*, Vol. 3, pp. 1-16. Tiflis, 1925.

——— (d) "Ethnography of the Caucasus: The Present State and Problems." (Etnografia Kavkaza: Sovremenoe sostoianie i zadachi.) *Novi Vostok* (New East), Vol. 15, pp. 202-211. Moscow, 1926.

——— (e) "Les Thalyches: Remarques Ethnographiques." (Talishi: Etnograficheskie zametki.) *Izvestia of the G.H.A.I.*, Vol. 4, pp. 15-40. Tiflis, 1926.

——— (f) "Cult of Fire among the Peoples of the Caucasus." (Kult ognia u kavkazskikh narodov.) *Ibid.*, Vols. 1-3, p. 12. Tiflis, 1928.

——— (g) "Cult of Trees and Woods among the Peoples of the Caucasus." (Kult dereva i lesa u kavkazskikh narodov.) *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

——— (h) "Veneration of Mountains, Rocks and Stones among the Peoples of the Caucasus." (Pochitanie gor, skal i kamnei u kavkazskikh narodov.) *Ibid.*, Vol. 4, Tiflis, 1928.

——— (i) "Cult of Water among the Peoples of the Caucasus." (Kult vodi u kavkazskikh narodov.) *Ibid.*

——— (j) "Cult of Hunting among the Peoples of the Caucasus." (Kult okhoti u kavhazskikh narodov.) *Ibid.*, Vol. 5, pp. 17-18. Tiflis, 1929.

——— (k) "Cult of Earth among the Peoples of the Caucasus." (Kult zemli u kavkazskikh narodov.) *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

113 —— (l) "Cult of Dog in the Caucasus." (Kult sobaki u kavkazskikh narodov.) *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

—— (m) "Plough-Festivals among the Mountaineers of Daghestan." (Prazdnik vikhoda pluga u gorskikh narodov Dagestana.) *Ibid.*, pp. 43-60.

—— (n) "Cult of Iron among the Peoples of the Caucasus." (Kult jeleza u kavkazskikh narodov.) *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, pp. 67-106.

—— (o) "Les amulettes et les talismanes du peuple du Caucase." (Amuletii talismani kavkazskikh narodov.) *S.M.C.*, Vol. 46, Pt. 2, pp. 197-240. Makhach-Kala, 1929.

Crawley, A. E.: "Metals and Minerals." *H.I.R.*, Vol. 8, pp. 588-93. 1922.

Derjavin, N. S.: "Ethnography of Abkhazia." (Abkhazia v etnograficheskom otnoshenii.) *S.M.C.*, Vol. 37, Pt. 1, pp. 1-38. 1907.

Dirr, A.: (a) "Deities of Hunt and the Hunting Language among the Peoples of the Caucasus.") Bojestva okhoti i okhotnichi iazik u kavkazstsev.) *S.M.C.*, Vol. 44, Pt. 4, pp. 1-16. 1915.

—— (b) *Einfuerung in das Studium der Kaukasischen Sprachen, mit einer Sprachenkarte.* Leipzig, 1928.

Djegangir, M.: "The Oriental Feuilleton." (Vostochni fel'eton.) In the gazette *Kavkaz*, No. 139. Tiflis, 1873.

Dmitriev, N.: *Inhabitants of Free Svanetia, Their Customs and Manner of Life.* (Iz bita i nravov jitelei vol'noi Svanetii.) Tiflis, 1897.

Dubois de Montpereux, Frederic: *Voyage autour du Caucase, chez Tcherkesses et les Abkhases, en Colchide, en Georgie, en Armenie et en Crimee.* 6 vols. and Atlas. Paris, 1893-94.

Dubrovin, N.: *History of the War and the Russian Domination in the Caucasus.* (Istoria voini i vladichestva russkikh na Kavkaze.) 2 vols. St. Petersburg (Leningrad), 1871.

Egiazarov, S.: "The Kurds of Erivan Department: Ethnographical Sketch." (Kratki etnograficheski ocherk kurdov Erivanskoi gubernii.) *Zapiski of the C.B.I.R.G. Soc.*, Vol. 13, Pt. 2.

Eristov, R. D.: (a) "The Tush-Pshav and Khevsur District." (O tushino-pshavo-khevsurskom okruge.) *Zapiski of the C.B.I.R.G. Soc.*, Vol. 3, pp. 75-145. Tiflis, 1855.

—— (b) "Notes on Svanetia." (Zametki o Svanetii.) *Ibid.*, Vol. 19. Tiflis, 1897.

Fraenkel, A. S., and Bakradze, D.: *The Code of Laws of the Georgian King Vakhtang VI.* (Sbornik sakonov gruzinskago Tsaria Vakhtanga VI.) Tiflis, 1887.

Freshfield, Douglas W.: *The Exploration of the Caucasus.* 2 vols. 2nd ed. E. Arnold, London, 1902.

Gabashvili, E.: "Property Rights of the Georgian Peasant Woman." (Imush'chestvennoe pravo gruzinki v krestianskoi semie.) In the gazette *Iveria*, May, 1889. Tiflis. A review of this work by Professor A. Khakhanov in the Russian language is in *E.O.*, Vol. 2, pp. 190-91. Moscow, 1889.

Gaster, M.: "Birth (Jewish.)" *H.E.R.*, Vol. 2, pp. 652-59. 1918.

Gerig, John Lawrence: "Hospitality." *H.E.R.*, Vol. VI, pp. 799-803. 1914.

Gruickshank, William: "Hospitality (Semitic)." *H.E.R.*, Vol. VI, pp. 816-18. 1914.

Gulbiani, Priest: "A Sketch of the Religions and Moral Life of the Svans." (Kratki ocherk religiozno-nravstvennago sostoiania svanetov.) *S.M.C.*, Vol. X, Pt. 1, pp. 88-94. 1890.

Gurko-Kriajin, V. A.: "The Khevsurs." (Khevsuri.) *Novi Vostok* (New East), Vols. 20-21, pp. 258-96. Moscow, 1928.

Hall, C. F.: *Life with the Esquimaux.* 1864.

Harper, Robert Francis: *The Code of Hammurabi.* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1904.

Hawkes, E. W.: "The Labrador Eskimo." Memoir 91 of the Geological Survey of Canada, Anthropological Series No. 14. Ottawa, 1916.

Hobhouse, L. T.: *Morals in Evolution: A Study in Comparative Ethics.* 2 vols. Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1906.

Jashvili, A.: *Folk-Medicine in Transcaucasia.* (Narodnaia meditsina v Zakavkazskom kraie.) Tiflis.

Janashvili, M.: (a) "The Georgian Beliefs." (Kartvel'skia poveria.) *S.M.C.*, Vol. 17, Pt. 1, pp. 144-173. 1893.

——— (b) "Abkhazia and Abkhazians." (Abkhazia i Abkhaztsi.) *Zapiski of the C.B.I.R.G. Soc.*, Vol. 16, 1894.

Japaridze, G.: "Holidays, Customs and Beliefs of the Georgians of Ratcha." (Narodnie prazdniki, obichai i poveria ratchintsev.) *S.M.C.*, Vol. 21, Pt. 2, pp. 107-150. 1896.

Javakhishvili, Ivane: (a) *A History of the Georgian Nation.* (Kartuli eris istoria.) 2 vols., 3rd ed. Tiflis, 1928-30. (In the Georgian.)

——— (b) *A History of Georgian Law.* (Katveli samartlis istoria.) 3 vols. Tiflis, 1928-29. (In the Georgien.)

Jorbenadze, S.: "The Village Nigoiti, Department of Kutais, District of Ozurgeti." (Selo Nigoiti, Kut. gub. Ozurg. uezda.) *S.M.C.*, Vol. 22, Pt. 2, pp. 239-47. 1897.

Kereselidze, D.: "The Village-Community of Lanchkhuti, Department of Kutais, Ozurget District." (Lanchkhutskoe sel'skoe obsh'chestvo, Kutaisskoi gubernii, Ozurgetskago uezda.) *S.M.C.*, Vol. 22, Pt. 2, pp. 220-38. 1897.

Khakhanov, Alexander D.: (a) "The Tushes: Ethnographical Outline." (Tushini. Etnograficheski ocherk.) *E.O.*, Vol. 2, pp. 40-62. Moscow, 1889.

——— (b) "Meskhis: An Ethnographical Outline." (Meskhi. Etnograficheski ocherk.) *E.O.*, Vol. 21, No. 4, pp. 1-39. 1891.

——— (c) "The Customs of the Georgian Peasants during the Ploughing." (Obochai grusinskikh krestian pri pakhanii.) *Ibid.*, pp. 192-95.

——— (d) "Fortune-Tellers and Sorcerers in the Georgian Laws." Gadateli i charodei po gruzinskim zakonam.) *E.O.*, Vols. 13-14, Nos. 2-3, pp. 233-34. 1892.

113 ——— (e) "The Communal Court among the Georgian Mountaineers." (Sud obsh'chini u gruzin-gortzev.) *E.O.*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 141-44. 1893.

——— (f) "An Agrarian Custom among the Peasants of Kakhetia." (Zemledel'cheski obichai krestian v Kakhetii.) *E.O.*, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp. 141-44. 1894.

——— (g) "Survival of the Old Custom in the Funeral Ceremonies of a Georgian Prince." (Perejitok starini v pokhoronom obriade gruzinskago kniazia.) *E.O.*, Vol. 31, No. 4, pp. 157-60. 1896.

——— (h) "A Strange Custom." (Strani obichai.) *E.O.*, Vol. 48, No. 1, pp. 161-62. 1901.

——— (i) "'Papis'—Servants of Christ and the Christian Ceremonies Which They Perform in Svanetia." (Sludjiteli khrista "papi" i khristianskie obriadi imi otpravlia-emie v Svanetii. Sledi narodnago bita.) *E.O.*, Vol. 54, No. 3, pp. 137-41. 1902.

Khizanashvili, David: "Pshavia and the Pshavs: Ethnographical Review." (Pshavia i Pshavtsi: Etnograficheskoe obozrenie.) *Zapiski of the C.B.I.R.G. Soc.*, Vol. 18, pp. 129-38. Tiflis, 1896.

Khudadov, N. A.: "Notes on Khevsuria." (Zametki o Khevsuretii.) *Zapiski of the C.B.I.R.G. Soc.*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1890.

Klaproth, H. Julius von: (a) *Travels in the Caucasus and Georgia, Performed in the Years 1807-1808 by Command of the Russian Government.* Translated from the German by F. Shoberl. London, 1814.

——— (b) *Voyage au Mont Caucase et en Géorgie.* Paris, 1823.

——— (c) *Tableau historique, géographique et politique du Caucase.* Paris, 1827.

Koch, Karl: *Reise in Grusien, am Kaspishen Meer und in Kaukasien.* Weimar, 1847.

Koschaker, Paul: "Cunieform Law." *E.S.S.*, Vol. 9, pp. 211-19.

Kovalevsky, M. M.: (a) *Law and Custom in the Caucasus.* (Zakon i obichaj na Kavkaze.) 2 vols. Moscow, 1890.

——— (b) *Coutume contemporaine et loi ancienne. Droit coutumier ossétien éclairé par l'histoire comparée.* Larose (editeur). Paris, 1893.

———(c) "La famille matriarcale au Caucase." *L'Anthropologie*, Tome 4, pp. 259-78. Paris, 1893.

Kroeber, A. L.: "The Eskimos of South Bend." *Bulletin of the Amer. Mus. of Nat. Hist.*, Vol. 12. 1899.

Ladishevski, A. M.: "Obichnoe semeinoe pravo cherkes." *Novi Vostok* (New East), Vol. 22, pp. 224-39. Moscow, 1928. The German translation of this Russian work was made by A. Dirr and published under the title: "Das Familiengewohnheitsrecht der Tscherkessen," in the *Zeitschrift fuer vergleichend Rechtswissenschaft*, Vol. 45, pp. 183 ff.

Lamberti, Arcangelo: *Relatione della Colchide.* Naples, 1654. A full Russian translation of this work was made by C. H. v. Hahn and published in *S.M.C.*, Vol. 43, Pt. 1, pp. 1-232. 1913. (Used in this work.)

Lapinski, Theodor: "Ein Opferfest bei den Adighe in Kaukasus." *Globus*, Vol. 2, pp. 378-80. 1862.

Langdon, S. H.: "Semitic Mythology." *The Mythology of All Races*, Vol. 5. Boston, 1931.

"Linturali." *E.O.*, Vol. 1, p. 138. 1889.

Longworth, J. A.: *A Year among the Circassians*. 2 vols. London, 1840.

Lowie, Robert H.: (a) *Primitive Society*. Boni and Liveright. New York, 1920.

—— (b) *Primitive Religion*. Boni and Liveright. New York, 1924.

Lulje, L.: "The Land Occupied by the Circassians." (Obsh'chi vzgliad na strani, zanimaemia narodami nazivaemimi cherkesami.) *Zapiski of the C.B.I.R.G. Soc.*, Vol. 4, pp. 173-93. 1857.

Machabeli, S. V. L.: "Economic Conditions of Life among the Peasants of Tionet District." (Ekonomicheskoe sostoianie krestian Tionetskago uezda.) *Material for the Investigation of Living Conditions of Peasants in Transcaucasia*, Vols. 1 and 5.

Machavariani, D., and Bartolomei, I. A.: "Information Concerning Samurzacan." (Nechto o Samurzakani.) *Zapiski of the C.B.I.R.G. Soc.*, Vol. 4, pp. 74-83. Tiflis, 1864.

Malinin, K. N.: "Bride Price and Marriage Portion among the Mountaineers of the Caucasus." (O svadebnikh platejakh i o pridannom u kavkazskikh gortsev.) *E.O.*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 21-61. 1890.

Malinowski, Bronislaw: (a) *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*.

—— (b) *Crime and Custom in Savage Society*. London, 1926.

Mamaladze, T.: "Customs and Beliefs of the Georgians of Guria." (Narodnie obichai i poveria gurjitsev.) *S.M.C.*, Vol. 17, Pt. 2, pp. 15-123. 1893.

Mamedov, A.: "Alpab. Lezgian Beliefs." (Alpab. Lezginskoe poverie.) *S.M.C.*, Vol. 13, Pt. 2, pp. 145-46. 1892.

Margiani, D.: "The Svans: Some Traits of Their Manners of Life." (Svaneti. Nekotoria cherti bita.) *S.M.C.*, Vol. 10, Pt. 1, pp. 69-87. 1890.

Markwart, Josef: "Woher stammt der Name Kaukasus?" *Caucasica*, Fasc. 6, I Teil, pp. 25-69. Leipzig, 1930.

Marr, N.: "The Gods of Pagan Georgia." (Bogi iazicheskoi Gruzii.) *Zapiski* (Memoirs) *of the Oriental Div. Imper. Russ. Archeol. Soc.*, Vol. 14, St. Petersburg (Leningrad), 1902.

Mashurko, M.: "The Popular Beliefs in the Departments of Tiflis and Kutais." (Iz oblasti narodnoi fantazii i bita Tiflisskoi i Kutaisskoi gubernji.) *S.M.C.*, Vol. 18, Pt. 3, pp. 228-410. 1898.

Mathiassen, T.: "Material Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos." *Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921-24*, I, 1928.

Merzbacher, Gottfried: *Aus den Hochregionen des Kaukasus*. 2 vols. Leipzig, 1901.

113 Meyer, Eduard: *Reich und Kultur der Chetiter.* Karl Curtius Verlag. Berlin, 1914.

Modi, J. J.: "Birth (Parsi)." *H.E.R.*, Vol. 2, pp. 660-62. 1918.

Morgan, E. Delmar: "The Customs of the Ossetes and the Light They Throw on the Evolution of Law." Compiled from Professor Maxim Kovalevsky's Russian work, "Contemporary Custom and Ancient Law," and translated with Notes by E. Delmar Morgan, M.R.A.S. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 20, pp. 364-412. London, 1888.

Muhlmann, W. E.: "Hospitality." *E.S.S.*, Vol. 7, pp. 462-64. 1932.

Omarov, A.: "The Manner of Life among the Laks." (Narodni bit Lakov.) *Sbornik* (Bulletin) *of the North Caucasian Mountaineers*, Vol. 4.

Potocky, Comte Jean: *Voyage dans les steppes d'Astrakhan et du Caucase.* Published by J. Klaproth. 2 vols. Paris, 1829.

"Pshavia and Pshavs." *Zapiski of the C.B.I.R.G. Soc.*, Book 2, pp. 247-52. 1853.

Radde, Dr. G.: (a) "Reisen im mingrelischen Hochlande. Bericht ueber biologish-geographischen Untersuchungen." (Puteshestvie v mengrel'skikh al'pakh i v triokh prodol' nikh dolinakh. Rion, Tskenistskali and Ingur.) *Zapiski of the C.B.I.R.G. Soc.*, Vol. 4, pp. 19-222. Tiflis, 1866.

——— (b) "Reisen unter den Swanen im Kaukasus." *Globus*, Vol. 20, No. 12. 1871.

——— (c) "Vorlaufiger Bericht ueber die im Sommer 1876 ausgefuhrten Reisen. (Nachrichten ueber die Chewsuren.)" *Petermann's Mitteilungen*, Vol. 24, pp. 248-63. 1878.

——— (d) *Die Chewsuren un ihr Land.* (*Ein monographisher Versuch*). *Untersucht im Sommer 1876.* Verlag von T. Fischer. Cassel, 1878.

Rawlinson, George: *History of Ancient Egypt.* 2 vols. J. Alden, London, 1886.

Reineggs, Dr. Jacob: *Allgemeine historish-topographische Beschreibung des Kaukasus.* 2 vols. Gotha-St. Petersburg, 1795-97.

Rivet, Paul: "Nils Erland Herbert Nordenskiold." *Journal de la Societe des Americanistes*, Tome 24, Fasc. 2, pp. 297 ff. Paris, 1932.

Sagaradze, M.: "Customs and Beliefs in Imerethi." (Obichai i verovania v Imeretii.) *S.M.C.*, Vol. 26, Pt. I, pp. 1-46.

Sapir, Edward: "Custom." *E.E.S.*, Vol. 4, pp. 658-62. 1931.

Smith, G. Elliot: *Human History.* W. W. Norton Co., New York, 1929.

Spencer, Herbert: *The Principles of Sociology.* 3 vols. D. Appleton & Co. New York and London, 1914.

Stepanov, I.: "Customs and Beliefs of the Georgians of Telav District, Department of Tiflis." (Primeti i Poveria gruzin Telavskago uiezda Tiflisskoi gubernii.) *S.M.C.*, Vol. 19, Pt. 2, pp. 78-103. 1894.

Stoianov, A. L.: "Voyage in Svanetia." (Puteshestvie po Svanetii.) *Zapiski of the C.B.I.R.G. Soc.*, Vol. 10, Pt. 2, 1876.

Taitboût de Marigny, E.: (a) *Voyages en Circassie en 1818. Voyages faits sur la côte de Circassie en 1818 par E. Taitboût de Marigny, capitaine de la coilette "La Circasienne."* Bruzelles, 1821. Odessa, 1836.

——— (b) "Voyage dans la pays des Tcherkesses." In le Come J. Potocky's *Voyage dans les steppes d'Astrakhan et du Caucase,* pp. 249-356. 2 vols. Published by J. Klaproth. Paris, 1829.

——— (c) *Voyages en Circassie.* Odessa, 1836.

Teptsov, V. J.: (a) "Svanetia: A Geographical Sketch." (Svanetia: Geograficheski ocherk.) *S.M.C.,* Vol. 10, Pt. 1, pp. 1-68. 1890.

——— (b) "The Life and Beliefs of the Georgians of Megrelia." (Iz bita i verovanji mingrel'tsev.) *S.M.C.,* Vol. 13, Pt. 3, pp. 1-26. 1894.

Tseretheli, M.: (a) "Sumerian and Georgian: A Study in Comparative Philology." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1913, pp. 783-821; 1914, pp. 1-36. London.

——— (b) "The Asiatic (Asia Minor) Elements in National Georgian Paganism." *Georgica,* Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 28-66. London, October, 1935.

Turner, L. M.: "Ethnology of the Ungava District, Hudson Bay Territory." Bureau of American Ethnology, Eleventh Annual Report, I, 1899-90. 1894.

Tylor, Sir Edward: *Primitive Culture.* New York. Brentano, 1924.

Urbneli: (a) "Ethnographical Notes." (Etnographiuli tserilebi.) In the Georgian journal, *Iveria,* No. 269. Tiflis, 1886.

——— (b) "Ethnographical Notes." (Etnographiluli Tserilebi.) *Ibid.,* No. 8. Tiflis, 1887. (In the Georgian.)

Uvarov, P. S.: *The Caucasus, Ratcha, District of Gori, the Mountains of Ossetia, Pshavia, Khevsuria and Svanetia. The Notes of a Journey. Part 3.* (Kavkaz, Ratcha, Goryiski uezd, gori Osetii, Pshavia, Khevsuretia i Svanetia. Putevia zametki. Chast 3.) Moscow, 1904.

Vakhusht, Prince: *The Geography of Georgia.* (Geografia Gruzii.) Tiflis, 1904. Edited in the Russian language and supplied with explanatory footnotes and introduction by M. G. Janashvili. This work was also previously published in French by M. Brosset with the title: *Description geographique de la Georgie.* St. Petersburg, 1842.

Wardrop, J. Oliver: (a) "Laws of King George V of Georgia, Surnamed 'the Brilliant,' from the Bodleian MS. of the Code of Vakhtang VI, formerly the Property of Prince David of Georgia." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 1914, pp. 607-26. London.

——— (b) "Review of A. Dirr's *Einfuehrung in das Studium der Kaukasischen Sprachen.*" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies,* London Institution, Vol. 5, pp. 187-88. Review of Books.

Wesendonk, O. G. von: (a) "Ueber georgische Heidentum." *Caucasica,* Fasc. I, pp. 1-102. Leipzig, 1924.

——— (b) "Nachtraege zum georgischen Heidentum." *Ibid.,* Fasc. 2, pp. 121-130. Leipzig, 1925.

Westermarck, Edward: (a) *Marriage Ceremonies in Morocco.* London, 1914.

—— (b) *The History of Human Marriage.* 3 vols. 5th ed. New York, 1922.

—— (c) *Ritual and Belief in Morocco.* 2 vols. London, 1926.

—— (d) *Early Beliefs and Their Social Influence.* London, 1932.

Weyer, E. M. J.: *The Eskimos: Their Environment and Folkways.* Yale University Press, New Haven, 1932.

Zampi, Guiseppe Maria: *Relatione della Colchida.* 1920.

Zisserman, A. L.: *Twenty-five Years in The Caucasus (1842-67).* (Dvadtsat piat liet na Kavkaze.) St. Petersburg, 1879.

Zvanbai, S.: "The Abkhazian Mythology and Religious Beliefs." (Abkhazskaia mifologia i religioznia poveria i obriadi mejdu jiteliami Abkhazii.) In *Kavkaz,* Nos. 81-82. Tiflis, 1855.